BENEDICT'S RULE

A Translation and Commentary

Terrence G. Kardong

VISIT…

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ISBN: 978-0-8146-3978-8

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Terrence G. Kardong

A Liturgical Press Book

THE LITURGICAL PRESS
Collegeville, Minnesota

Cover design by Ann Blattner.

Latin text from *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes,* published by The Liturgical Press. Copyright © 1981 by The Order of St. Benedict, Inc., Collegeville, Minnesota. Used with permission.

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The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kardong, Terrence.
Benedict's Rule : a translation and commentary / Terrence G. Kardong.
p. cm.
Includes Latin text of the Rule with English translation.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-8146-2325-5
1. Benedict, Saint, Abbot of Monte Cassino. Regula—Commentaries. I. Benedict, Saint, Abbot of Monte Cassino. Regula. English & Latin. II. Title.
BX3004.Z5K34 1996
255'.106—dc20 95-44759
CIP

To my brothers of Assumption Abbey,

who taught me how to be a monk
and who freed me for the work of writing
this commentary on the Rule of Benedict

CONTENTS

Author's Preface xi
RB Prologue 1
Prologue Overview 26
RB 1 33
RB 1 Overview 42
RB 2 45
RB 2 Overview 62
RB 3 69
RB 3 Overview 75
RB 4 79
RB 4 Overview 96
RB 5 102
RB 5 Overview 113
RB 6 118
RB 6 Overview 124
RB 7 129
RB 7 Overview 160
RB 8 169
RB 9 171
RB 10 177
RB 11. 179
RB 12 183
RB 13 185
RB 14 188
RB 15 189
RB 16 191

RB 17 194
RB 18 197
RB 19 203
RB 20 206
RB 8–20 Overview 209
RB 21 217
RB 21 Overview 221
RB 22 223
RB 22 Overview 227
RB 23 230
RB 24 233
RB 25 235
RB 26 238
RB 27 239
RB 28 244
RB 29 248
RB 30 249
RB 23–30 Overview 251
RB 31 257
RB 32 266
RB 31–32 Overview 268
RB 33 272
RB 34 278
RB 33–34 Overview 282
RB 35 288
RB 35 Overview 296
RB 36 300
RB 36 Overview 305
RB 37 309
RB 38 311
RB 38 Overview 318
RB 39 321
RB 40 327
RB 41 332
RB 39–41 Overview 338
RB 42 344
RB 43 350

RB 44 360
RB 45 365
RB 46 367
RB 43–46 Overview 371
RB 47 378
RB 48 381
RB 48 Overview 396
RB 49 401
RB 49 Overview 408
RB 50 410
RB 51 413
RB 52 414
RB 53 419
RB 53 Overview 431
RB 54 436
RB 55 439
RB 55 Overview 450
RB 56 454
RB 57 457
RB 58 462
RB 58 Overview 479
RB 59 485
RB 59 Overview 490
RB 60 492
RB 61 497
RB 62 504
RB 60–62 Overview 510
RB 63 514
RB 63 Overview 523
RB 64 525
RB 64 Overview 537
RB 65 541
RB 65 Overview 551
RB 66 555
RB 67 561
RB 68 566
RB 69 573

RB 70 576
RB 71 580
RB 72 587
RB 72 Overview 598
RB 73 602
RB 73 Overview 612
Works Cited 620
Abbreviations 620
Patristic Works Cited 621
Secondary Works Cited 626
Index of Key Words and Themes Discussed in Notes 638

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

A. The Genesis of the Project

Sometime in the spring of 1992, I decided to write this commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict. Strange as it may seem, no American had ever produced a complete, line-by-line study of the Holy Rule. Even though the Benedictines came to these shores 150 years ago, up to this time few of them have devoted themselves to systematic study of the ancient Rule they live by. Indeed compared to, say, biblical studies, Rule studies are still in a rudimentary stage. This is obvious when one considers that the Latin text of the Rule was only versified after 1950, and the first English translation to do so was *RB 1980*.

For me personally, it seemed time to attempt this large undertaking. I was fifty-five years-of-age, a time when one can already feel the effects of old age with its attendant lack of energy. I had published twenty-five or thirty specialized articles on the Rule, and it seemed time to pull them together into a synthetic study.

In a way, I was not a very likely candidate for the job of writing the first complete RB commentary in English. (Readers should recall that the very popular commentary of Paul Delatte is a translation from the French.) After all, I only got involved in serious research on monastic subjects at age forty. At that time I was sent to Rome to study in the Monastic Institute at Sant' Anselmo, probably to prepare me to be novice director.

I did have a good background for this work in that I had a previous degree in Classical Latin and had taught it for many years in our seminary. But I soon found out that much of the best modern research on the Rule has been done in French, German and Italian, so I had to spend years learning to read those languages as well. All of that came in very handy in writing this commentary, for almost all the best translations and philological commentaries are in foreign languages.

But the crucial factor that lays behind this project is simply that I have been given the time to do it. Since I returned from Europe in 1977,

I have been allowed to spend much of my time on precisely the kind of study and writing that could lead up to this project. I have plowed through hundreds of learned books and articles on the Rule and have edited a journal where they are regularly published *(The American Benedictine Review)*.

This point is worth repeating. The only reason why I am the first American to produce a full commentary on the Rule is because I am the first one who had the time to do so. While this kind of intellectual labor does not put bread on the table, my community values monastic studies enough to subsidize my work for fifteen years. There have been American monastic scholars before my time who could have done this task as well or better than I did it, but they simply did not have the opportunity. In fact, I would have to say that the ultimate reason I undertook it was because I felt it was the best way to pay back my community for the trust they had placed in me.

But I return to the point of my qualifications for this work. Looking back to 1977, I can see that I should have continued on for doctoral studies that would have sharpened my scholarly skills beyond what they are. But there is now emerging a crop of young Benedictine scholars in this country who are trained to the Ph.D. level and who will be quite capable of surpassing my work if they are given the opportunity. If my less-than-perfect work goads them to do it better, then it will not have been in vain.

B. The Nature of This Commentary

Since it is a one-man project, this commentary tends to be personal and perhaps even idiosyncratic. This, of course, has both its advantages and its drawbacks. It seems to me that one advantage in an individual project can lie in the possibilities for freshness and new insight. With no committee to please, one can dare to express some risky opinions or even some intuitions that have not been stated before. Of course, there is the danger of making a fool of oneself, but I hope my editors have steered me away from the worst gaffes.

One of the first things I discovered when I began working was the necessity for a new translation. I had thought I could work with the *RB 1980* rendition, but that proved impossible. It is a good piece of work and deserves its place as the standard American translation, but I soon found that I was spending too much time arguing with it. In retrospect it seems clear to me that a new commentary demands a new translation.

My philosophy of translation is not very highly developed, but at least I can say that I always preferred accuracy over elegance. Since this is primarily a study volume, it seems most important to put mean-

ing before tradition or aesthetics in the translation. Since a translation must be readable, some principles of English style could not be maintained without violating the original Latin. Benedict's diction is pretty rough and ready in places; I have not smoothed it out except where full accuracy would be a distraction and perhaps create confusion. Where these kinds of adjustments have been made, explanation is given in the notes.

A glance at the table of contents and the body of the text will reveal a number of "overviews" throughout the commentary. These are introduced when it is felt there is need for extended treatment of the material in a given chapter or group of chapters. Rather than bloat the line-by-line commentary with these discussions, it was thought better to save them for the end of chapters. This has the effect of producing a double-deck commentary with detailed philological material in the notes and discursive material in the overviews. Yet the reader should be warned that the overviews are not always summaries of the notes. Sometimes they are reports on the research of scholars on various controverted parts of the text. Other times they are ventures into source criticism or structural criticism such as would not fit well in the line-by-line notes.

Although this commentary is primarily my own interpretation of the Rule, I have not hesitated to report what other modern scholars have to say about the subject. Since so much of this literature is in French and German, and never will be translated, it is important that Anglophone readers become aware of all that is being done in this field. A commentary seems a good framework in which to present this material.

In describing the genre of this commentary, one would have to say that it is a mixture of the scientific and the existential. Certainly my interest is primarily in literary and historical criticism, so that is the predominant tone of the book. For example, virtually every commentator I used for my work is scientific in approach. Consequently, I have not consulted the traditional "wisdom" commentaries of writers like Delatte and Van Zeller. Insightful as they may be, their approach to the Rule is not scholarly but experiential.

On the other hand, I have made no attempt to deny my own experience as a monk who has tried to live according to the Rule of Benedict for thirty-five years. Although it may seem illogical to leave other wisdom commentators out of consideration while consulting my own experience, there are reasons for this approach. For the scientific commentators, among whom I count myself, start with an objective approach to the text; upon the basis of that data, we feel free to make our own hermeneutical comments. When this method is working well, the literary and historical data is the control, but it comes to life in the

application one makes to life situations. Although this book is not meant to be a commentary on modern monastic life, it seems sterile to try to comment on the ancient text without any reference to what modern monks are doing with it.

Just as I have not based myself on the traditional commentators, neither have I taken into account the posthistory of the Rule in medieval Benedictine monasticism. Perhaps the most glaring omission is Gregory the Great and his *Dialogue II* on the life of Benedict. Many commentators make free use of that hagiographical text to flesh out the often laconic RB, and also to get some insight into the "mind of Benedict." In my opinion, the two documents are too different in genre to allow that sort of procedure. Certainly *Dialogue II* is an important part of Benedictine tradition, but I don't think that it helps us to understand the Rule itself. Likewise, I do not pay much attention to those monastic legislators after Benedict who used his Rule for a source.

But the reverse is true for the pre-Benedictine monastic tradition. Along with all reputable modern scholars, I pay a great deal of attention to the monastic authors that wrote in the two centuries between the birth of monasticism (ca. A.D. 325) and Benedict's own time (ca. A.D. 540). It is necessary to do this because Benedict made use of many of these texts in compiling his own Rule. The word "compiling" is used advisedly, since there are parts of RB that are word for word copying, and everywhere there are copious quotes and allusions to older writers. We are now aware of most of those references and so we can try to evaluate the influences of these writers on Benedict.

Of course this approach is disappointing to some because it gives the impression that Benedict was somehow derivative or second-rate. Yet that is a false conclusion. In fact, almost all ancient writers were avid copyists and plagiarists with little or no sense that anyone else's rights were being violated. Most of the monastic writers were not self-conscious litterateurs intent on writing original material. Usually they were busy superiors writing for the guidance of their own monks.

The judicious use of source criticism in our own time can sometimes give us an insight into the mind of an author in a way that an uninformed commonsense commentary cannot. For example, when we compare the way Benedict picks his way carefully through the Rule of the Master, sometimes copying for line after line, sometimes omitting a word or adding one, sometimes skipping whole pages, we do get some special insight into his mind. This can be painstaking and subtle work, but it is one of the main tools of modern exegesis. At any rate, we will be making frequent references to the parallel passages in Cassian, Augustine and Basil that help to illuminate the Rule of Benedict.

One of the hardest methodological decisions I had to make regarding this book involved gender-inclusive language. No doubt those readers who are specially sensitive to this issue will lament the fact that much of the language in this book does not qualify as gender-inclusive. The reason is that the Rule was written for males and if one is to interpret it as an historic document, one must work with that fact; any attempt to change it simply rewrites history.

On the other hand, I am fully aware that at least half of all the Benedictines in history (and probably more than that) have been women. These women have their own vocabulary ("prioress," etc.) and they also have their own way of living the Rule. I hope that my attempts to relate the Rule to modern monastic life have sufficiently taken them into account. As for the historic text and its original meaning, though, they will have to make their own interpretation of what it means for them as women.

C. Work Methods

As I have said, I did not undertake this extensive commentary merely to tell the world what other scholars have to say about the subject. Nevertheless, I do not pretend to be completely original in what I have done. My general method was to do my own work first and then consult the other experts.

Thus in the translation I worked directly from the Latin of J. Neufville's text with the aid of *The Oxford Latin Dictionary* and *Dictionnaire Latin-Français des Auteurs Chrétiens* of A. Blaise. Then I systematically checked the translations of the following authors: B. Steidle, Salzburg (German Benedictine scholars), H. Rochais, P. Schmitz, A. de Vogüé. The first two of these are German and the last three French. Only as a final check did I look at *RB 1980* because I did not want to prejudice my work or duplicate that translation.

For the detailed notes on the text, which are partly philological and partly exegetical, I depended most on A. Lentini. His commentary was most useful to me because it is close to my own in its format and approach. Lentini has written a line-by-line study and he gives detailed philological explanation of the Latin. Generally I found his interpretation balanced and reasonable, though it is in my view too pious and uncritical.

Another good source for philological insight is found in the notes of A. de Vogüé to his translation in Volume II of his great commentary. He makes no attempt to gild the lily of Benedict's rough Latin and he provides good references to parallel texts in other authors. An especially rich listing of the patristic sources of Benedict is found in the

commentary of G. Holzherr, although at times he seems to forget about the primary focus, namely, the text of the Holy Rule.

Once I had translated the text and commented on it, I turned to special studies where these were available. Here the work of Vogüé was of considerable importance, for he has provided us with invaluable background studies in his monumental six-volume commentary on the Rule. Indeed, his work is so detailed and so profound as to be almost definitive, but it can also be overpowering and intimidating. Therefore I was careful not to review his work before I had done my own. In most cases we agree, but not always.

The same was true of several other modern scholars, among whom four were of great help in my work. A. Böckmann shares my own interest in applying her exegesis to the actual circumstances of modern monks and nuns. But she is particularly valuable as a scholar who is slowly and patiently working her way through the most important chapters of RB and producing detailed commentaries on a piecemeal basis.

In the area of structural criticism perhaps no RB scholar has done more than A. Borias. Just before undertaking this commentary I worked through his many fine articles on the literary structures of RB and so I was able to introduce his insights at the appropriate places. I also appreciate Borias' steady emphasis on the communal element in the Rule. On this matter we are in total agreement.

Next, M. Casey's articles on the Rule of Benedict have been very helpful to me. Besides a good grounding in the field of monastic studies, he brings to the task an expert understanding of psychology. In so doing, he is able to add the insights of modern social science to the customary skills in literary and historical criticism. Most of all I envy his exquisite prose style.

Finally, I wish to thank Fr. Ambrose Wathen for his role in bringing about this book. It was his inspired teaching that opened my eyes to the powerful message of the Holy Rule and he was the one who encouraged me to go to Rome to pursue monastic studies. Moreover, his own articles on the subject have been a source of stimulation. Not only has he contributed new insights to the field of RB research, but he has been willing to take some risks in proposing new methodologies.

With all of these modern scholars I am relying on notes I took on their work over many years. Since some of them write in languages not my own, I hope I have understood them fully. But most of all I hope I have not misrepresented anyone's argumentation, especially when I have disagreed with it! Even though scientific studies of the Rule are still in their infancy, I am confident that these scholars have made a lasting contribution to the field.

D. Looking Back on the Project

Since this Preface is being written after the fact, it is possible to look back on the experience of writing a complete commentary. It is something I wanted to do for a long time and now I have done it. What was it like? Since the book took over two years to write and covers many hundreds of pages, was the time and effort worth it?

While the experience of working through every line and every word of the Rule was a grueling one, it was also gratifying. The Rule is a classic document that deserves close scrutiny and no part of it is unworthy of attention. It is one of those books for all times that are worth poring over from the beginning to the end. I once met a Brazilian nun who knew the entire Latin text of the Rule by heart; I will never be able to say that I know the document like that, but at least I have examined every inch of it.

Of course one always learns things in such an endeavor. There were parts of the Rule that I had never looked at closely before, and there were also some aspects of familiar passages that I had never noticed. But by and large I cannot say that the joy of new discovery was a big part of the experience. Perhaps that is due to the very exigencies of the task, for one must keep moving and not stop to dig any deep new holes, for if there are many new deep probes, the job may never come to closure.

For someone who has written many specialized studies on many themes and words of the Rule (see Works Cited under my name), there is a frustration in having to keep marching and not chase new hares through the brush. Some may think that I should have been even less thorough than I was, for this is a very big book. But from my point of view, it was often a discipline to not say more, especially in those parts of the Rule where I have done extensive previous work, or where other scholars have found a good deal to explain.

Writing a commentary is not like most other kinds of writing in that it is fragmentary and not sustained discourse. Because one is limited to explaining a text that has its own movement from verse to verse, and because the explanation must be reasonably brief, there is little sense of flow and rhythm to the work. As commentaries go, however, this one is not as terse as it could be. For example, I tried to avoid the cryptic and excessively compressed remarks that one sometimes finds in even the best biblical commentaries. To avoid that, I expressed myself in full sentences and not in shorthand. Of course the overviews offer some scope for more sustained writing; looking back I almost wonder if I included them so as to have at least some opportunity to work in sustained essay form.

Overall, I think this project was well worth my time. Anyone who spends a major part of his or her time researching a classic text from the past ought to think about doing a full commentary. No doubt the specialists will cluck that the age for that sort of thing is past, but there is something to be said for a study that spans an entire book. At the very least one will have become familiar with those parts of the book that have little personal or scientific appeal. As for me, at least I feel that I completed a life task that I needed to do. This does not mean an end to my work on the Holy Rule, but never again will I do it in just this way.

THE RULE OF BENEDICT

(REGULA BENEDICTI, ed. Dom Jean Neufville, *Sources Chrétiennes,* 181–182, repr. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn.)

PROLOGUS

[1]Obsculta, o fili, praecepta magistri, et inclina aurem cordis tui, et admonitionem pii patris libenter excipe et efficaciter comple, [2]ut ad eum per oboedientiae laborem redeas, a quo per inoboedientiae desidiam recesseras. [3]Ad te ergo nunc mihi sermo dirigitur, quisquis abrenuntians propriis voluntatibus, Domino Christo vero regi militaturus, oboedientiae fortissima atque praeclara arma sumis.

[4]In primis, ut quicquid agendum inchoas bonum, ab eo perfici instantissima oratione deposcas, [5]ut qui nos iam in filiorum dignatus est numero computare non debet aliquando de malis actibus nostris contristari. [6]Ita enim ei omni tempore de bonis suis in nobis parendum est ut non solum iratus pater suos non aliquando filios exheredet, [7]sed nec, ut metuendus dominus irritatus a malis nostris, ut nequissimos servos perpetuam tradat ad poenam qui eum sequi noluerint ad gloriam.

[8]Exsurgamus ergo tandem aliquando excitante nos scriptura ac dicente: *Hora est iam nos de somno surgere,* [9]et apertis oculis nostris ad deificum lumen, attonitis auribus audiamus divina cotidie clamans quid nos admonet vox dicens: 10*Hodie si vocem eius audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra.* [11]Et iterum: *Qui habet aures audiendi audiat quid spiritus dicat ecclesiis.* [12]Et quid dicit? *Venite, filii, audite me; timorem Domini docebo vos.* [13]*Currite dum lumen* vitae *habetis, ne tenebrae* mortis *vos comprehendant.*

[14]Et quaerens Dominus in multitudine populi cui haec clamat operarium suum, iterum dicit: [15]*Quis est homo qui vult vitam et cupit videre dies bonos?* [16]Quod si tu audiens respondeas: Ego, dicit tibi Deus: [17]Si vis habere veram et perpetuam vitam, *prohibe linguam tuam a malo et labia tua ne loquantur dolum; deverte a malo et fac bonum, inquire pacem et sequere eam.* [18]Et cum haec feceritis, *oculi* mei *super* vos *et aures* meas ad

preces vestras, *et antequam me invocetis dicam* vobis: *Ecce adsum.* [19]Quid dulcius nobis ab hac voce Domini invitantis nos, fratres carissimi? [20]Ecce pietate sua demonstrat nobis Dominus viam vitae. [21]Succinctis ergo fide vel observantia bonorum actuum lumbis nostris, per ducatum evangelii pergamus itinera eius, ut mereamur eum *qui* nos *vocavit in regnum suum* videre.

[22]In cuius regni tabernaculo si volumus habitare, nisi illuc bonis actibus curritur, minime pervenitur. [23]Sed interrogemus cum propheta Dominum dicentes ei: *Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo, aut quis requiescet in monte sancto tuo?* [24]Post hanc interrogationem, fratres, audiamus Dominum respondentem et ostendentem nobis viam ipsius tabernaculi, [25]dicens: *Qui ingreditur sine macula et operatur iustitiam;* [26]*qui loquitur veritatem in corde suo, qui non egit dolum in lingua sua;* [27]*qui non fecit proximo suo malum, qui opprobrium non accepit adversus proximum suum;* [28]qui *malignum* diabolum aliqua suadentem sibi, cum ipsa suasione sua a *conspectibus* cordis sui respuens, *deduxit ad nihilum,* et *parvulos* cogitatos eius *tenuit et allisit ad* Christum; [29]qui, *timentes Dominum,* de bona observantia sua non se reddunt elatos, sed ipsa in se bona non a se posse sed a Domino fieri existimantes, [30]operantem in se Dominum *magnificant,* illud cum propheta dicentes: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam;* [31]sicut nec Paulus apostolus de praedicatione sua sibi aliquid imputavit, dicens: *Gratia Dei sum id quod sum;* [32]et iterum ipse dicit: *Qui gloriatur, in Domino glorietur.* [33]Unde et Dominus in evangelio ait: *Qui audit verba mea haec et facit ea, similabo eum viro sapienti qui aedificavit domum suam super petram;* [34]*venerunt flumina, flaverunt venti, et impegerunt in domum illam, et non cecidit, quia fundata erat super petram.*

[35]Haec complens Dominus exspectat nos cotidie his suis sanctis monitis factis nos respondere debere. [36]Ideo nobis propter emendationem malorum huius vitae dies ad indutias relaxantur, [37]dicente apostolo: *An nescis quia patientia Dei ad paenitentiam te adducit?* [38]Nam pius Dominus dicit: *Nolo mortem peccatoris, sed convertatur et vivat.*

[39]Cum ergo interrogassemus Dominum, fratres, de habitatore tabernaculi eius, audivimus habitandi praeceptum, sed si compleamus habitatoris officium. [40]Ergo praeparanda sunt corda nostra et corpora sanctae praeceptorum oboedientiae militanda, [41]et quod minus habet in nos natura possibile, rogemus Dominum ut gratiae suae iubeat nobis adiutorium ministrare. [42]Et si, fugientes gehennae poenas, ad vitam volumus pervenire perpetuam, [43]dum adhuc vacat et in hoc corpore sumus et haec omnia per hanc lucis vitam vacat implere, [44]currendum et agendum est modo quod in perpetuo nobis expediat.

[45]Constituenda est ergo nobis dominici schola servitii. [46]In qua institutione nihil asperum, nihil grave, nos constituturos speramus; [47]sed et si quid paululum restrictius, dictante aequitatis ratione, propter emenda-

tionem vitiorum vel conservationem caritatis processerit, [48]non ilico pavore perterritus refugias viam salutis quae non est nisi angusto initio incipienda. [49]Processu vero conversationis et fidei, dilatato corde inenarrabili dilectionis dulcedine curritur via mandatorum Dei, [50]ut ab ipsius numquam magisterio discedentes, in eius doctrinam usque ad mortem in monasterio perseverantes, passionibus Christi per patientiam participemur, ut et regno eius mereamur esse consortes. Amen.

PROLOGUE

1. Listen, O my son, to the teachings of your master, and turn to them with the ear of your heart. Willingly accept the advice of a devoted father and put it into action. 2. Thus you will return by the labor of obedience to the one from whom you drifted through the inertia of disobedience. 3. Now then I address my words to you: whoever is willing to renounce self-will, and take up the powerful and shining weapons of obedience to fight for the Lord Christ, the true king.

4. First, when you set out to do some good work, beg him with most insistent prayer to bring it to completion. 5. Then the one who has already been so good as to count us among the number of his sons may never have to rage over our evil actions. 6. By means of the good things he has given us, we should at all times obey him so that he will not disinherit us like an angry father does his sons. 7. Nor will he, like a fearsome lord enraged by our offenses, give us over to perpetual punishment as wicked slaves who did not wish to follow him to glory.

8. Therefore, let us rise at long last, for Scripture stirs us with the words: "It is high time we rose from sleep" (Rom 13:11). 9. Let us open our eyes to the divine light, and let us listen with astonished ears to the warning of the divine voice, which daily cries out to us: 10. "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Ps 94:8). 11. And again: "Whoever has ears for hearing should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev 2:7). 12. And what does the Spirit say? "Come, children, hear me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Ps 34:12). 13. "Run while you have the light of life, that the darkness not overtake you" (John 12:35).

14. The Lord, seeking a worker for himself in the crowds to whom he cries out, says: 15. "Which of you desires life and longs to see good days?" (Ps 34:13). 16. If you hear this and respond "I do!" God says to you: 17. "If you desire true and lasting life, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit; avoid evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it. 18. When you have done this, my eyes will be on you and my ears will attend to your prayers; before you even invoke me, I will say: 'Here I am!'" (Ps 34:14-16; Isa 58:9; 65:24). 19. What could be

sweeter, dearest brothers, than this voice of the Lord, who invites us? 20. Look, the Lord in his devotion to us shows us the way to life. 21. Therefore, let us belt our waist with faith that leads to the performance of good works. Let us set out on his path with the Gospel as our guide so that we may be worthy to see him who called us into his kingdom.

22. If we wish to dwell in the tent of his kingdom we shall not arrive unless we run there by good deeds. 23. But let us ask the Lord with the Prophet, saying: "Lord, who will dwell in your tent, or who will rest on your holy mountain?" (Ps 15:1). 24. After this question, brothers, listen to the Lord's response, which shows us the way to his tent: 25. "The person who walks blamelessly and acts justly" (Ps 15:2); 26. who speaks the truth candidly and has not committed fraud with his tongue (Ps 15:3); 27. who does the neighbors no ill, nor listens to slander against him" (Ps 15:3). 28. When the wicked one, the devil, suggests something, he pushes both him and his advice out of the sight of his heart; he annihilates (the satanic) incipient thoughts, taking them and smashing them against Christ. 29. The fear of the Lord keeps these people from vaunting themselves for their good performance, for they know that what is good in themselves could not have come about except for the Lord. 30. They heap praise on the Lord working in them, saying with the prophet: "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory" (Ps 115:1). 31. Likewise, the Apostle Paul took no credit for his preaching, simply saying: "I am what I am due to God's grace" (1 Cor 15:10). 32. And again, he says: "Whoever boasts should boast in the Lord" (2 Cor 10:17). 33. Thus the Lord says in the Gospel: "Whoever hears my words and does them I liken to the prudent person who built a house on a rock. The floods came, the winds blew and battered that house, but it did not collapse because it was founded on rock" (Matt 7:24-25).

35. Having finished his discourse, the Lord waits for us to respond by action every day to his holy warnings. 36. Therefore the days of this life are given us as a time of truce for the correction of our faults. 37. The Apostle says: "Don't you know that the patience of God leads you to repentance?" (Rom 2:4). 38. For the Lord in his benevolence says: "I do not wish the death of the sinner, but rather that he change his ways and live" (Ezek 33:11). 39. And so, brothers, we have queried the Lord about what is required of a dweller in his tent, and we have received the teaching about dwelling there. The question is—will we fulfil the duties of an inhabitant? 40. Therefore we must prepare our hearts and our bodies to wage the battle of holy obedience to his precepts. 41. Let us pray the Lord to command the help of his grace to aid us in that which we cannot accomplish by nature. 42. And if we wish to flee the punishment of hell and attain eternal life, 43. while there is still time and we are still in this body, and there remains time to accomplish all

this in the light of this life, 44. we must run and accomplish now what will profit us for eternity.

45. Therefore we must establish a school for the Lord's service. 46. In its organization, we have tried not to create anything grim or oppressive. 47. In a given case we may have to arrange things a bit strictly to correct vice or preserve charity. 48. When that happens, do not immediately take fright and flee the path of salvation, which can only be narrow at its outset. 49. But as we progress in the monastic life and in faith, our hearts will swell with the unspeakable sweetness of love, enabling us to race along the way of God's commandments. 50. Then we will never depart from his teaching and we will persevere in his doctrine in the monastery until death. Likewise, we will participate in the passion of Christ through patience so as to deserve to be companions in his kingdom. Amen.

Prologue Notes

1.

Listen! (Obsculta). The first verse of the Prologue closely resembles the exhortations found in the wisdom literature of the Bible such as Prov 4:1,10,20. This beginning sets the tone of RB as practical wisdom on how to live the monastic life. In this sense, the Rule itself is a "school of the Lord's service" (Prol 45). See Odermann, 25–49; Pomedli, 96–108. The first verse explains the full significance of listening: complete attention of the whole person; good will; implementation (Böckmann, 7.20). "Hearing" has priority over seeing and activity in both RB and the Bible. Recall the central prayer of the Jewish Bible: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord our one God" (Deut 6:4). See P. Miquel, 1.3-18.

Obsculto/Ausculto, plus half a dozen other words of Prol 1, are also found in the first verse of a similar exhortation called *Admonitio ad filium spiritualem*. Another name for the text is *Pseudo-Basil*, but it is probably not from the pen of the Cappadocian Father. A. de Vogüé thinks it was probably written at Lérins in the fifth century. It is based on the Latin version of Basil's Rule by Rufinus, but it differs from that cenobitic document in that it is addressed to an independent, eremitic monk. It is a sententious treatise, full of generalities, and probably written by Abbot Porcarius (ca. A.D. 480–490), whose "Rule of Macarius" (see Pseudo-Macarius) it resembles with its frequent quotations of Cyprian and Jerome. See Vogüé, 14.19-34.

my son (O fili). Even though the master-disciple relationship of the wisdom tradition often uses filial language, Benedict usually avoids it.

The monk is called *filius* only one other time in RB (2.29), and that is a biblical quote. Contrasted with the constant use of the term by the Rule of the Master, this indicates a wariness of paternalism on the part of Benedict. See *Index:* Son.

teachings (praecepta). The author does not say exactly where he gets his doctrine *(praecepta, admonitio, sermo)*. The matter is less obscure in *Ps.-Basil,* preface: "These words come from me, but they are created by a divine source. I transmit to you not a new teaching, but what I myself learned from the Fathers."

master (magistri). Vogüé translates "your master," apparently referring to the author or speaker, but he also suggests (I.413, note 1) that Benedict may be referring to the Rule of the Master. Admittedly, the bulk of the RB Prol is copied from RM, but the first three lines are a personal creation, deliberately added by Benedict to the Master. Therefore, it is unlikely that he would abdicate his own authority to the Master in the first line. *Magistri* could also refer to Christ or God, who is mentioned in v. 2 *(ad eum)*, but this would then give the impression that the whole of the Rule is a result of divine revelation. The Master makes that claim in Prol 2 and 5, as well as in the title of every chapter: "The Lord has replied through the Master"; Benedict shows no such inclination. The abbot's *praecepta* are mentioned in RB 2.24; 3.6; 5.9; 6.6. See *Index:* Master. In RB 2.24, the abbot is told to blend the rigor of a master *(dirum magistri)* with the tenderness of a father *(pium patris),* so it is probably no accident that both "master" and "loving father" occur in the same verse of the Prologue. By the same token, Matthew 23:9-10 warns us to reserve the title "master" for Christ and "father" for God. Benedict moves explicitly to the divine-human economy in the next verse (Böckmann, 7.21).

ear of the heart (aurem cordis tui). For Benedict, the heart refers to the mind as much as to the bodily center. It is the arena where the person encounters God (Böckmann, 7.24). By his frequent use of "the heart," especially in the early chapters of the Rule (where he is dependent on RM), Benedict shows that he belongs to the "experiential" camp of spirituality as opposed to the intellectual, Platonic wing. See Châtillon, 2278. Regarding the metaphor "ear of the heart," Benedict was little inclined to figurative language, but this phrase was an ecclesiastical commonplace (Lentini, 9).

advice (admonitionem) can mean either a friendly suggestion or a correction (Harper's, s.v.). Since the author of the *admonitio* is called *pius* ("devoted, loving") in the same breath, the meaning seems to be "fatherly advice."

willingly accept (libenter excipe) is third in a series of demands for receptivity: *obsculta, inclina, excipe*. Only with the fourth verb is activity called for. We seem to be in the atmosphere of the Desert Fathers, where the seeker asks for a "word of life" from a master. Then one must listen intently to the reply. The same adverb, *libenter*, is found in RB 4.55, "Listen gladly to holy readings." *Lectio divina* is modeled on the same pattern: hear, ponder, implement.

put it into action (efficaciter comple). The adverb *efficaciter* is very strong, and calls for a potent translation. Besides echoing sapiential pragmatism, insistence on concrete action is typical of ancient monasticism, which was much more a lifestyle than a theory. This kind of thinking lies behind Thomas Aquinas' teaching on the parts of prudence: observe, judge, act, a triad that was the heart of Jocist theory in the years after World War II. See *Index:* Action.

2.

The concept of return to God through obedience is found in RM Prol and Thp 5-6, but not in *Ps.-Basil.* Vogüé (1.412) suggests that RB Prol 1–4 is actually a précis of the entire introduction of RM before the point where RB commences copying (RM Ths 1; RB Prol 5). Verses 1-2 form a long, periodic sentence, concerning the style of which Lentini (8) has this to say: "The natural and effective antithesis as well as the symmetry of the words in this second part of the period form a noble close to the short introduction, an elegant rhetorical creation." The formulation of Prol 2 is traditional: "Let them return to him from whom they have departed" (Cyprian, *ep.* 65.5); "Let us return to him from whom we had departed by sin" (Augustine, *civ.,* 11.28).

labor of obedience (oboedientiae laborem). Obedience to a superior and to confreres will be one of Benedict's main monastic virtues (see RB 5; 71; 72), but the reference here seems even more fundamental. Like Paul in Rom 5:19, Benedict calls sin itself "disobedience," with the implication that obedience refers to the entire life of one who is faithful to God. Likewise, Christ's whole life and mission can be summarized as "obedience" (Phil 2:8). *Oboedientiae laborem* is an example of the explicative genitive, with the labor defined as obedience. Benedict is careful to show that the "labor" that will bring a cenobite back to God is not so much asceticism as obedience. See B. Steidle, 8.

inertia (desidiam) refers to a long rest in one place, and is usually pejorative, "sloth" (Harper's, s.v.). In RB 48.23 and 73.7, Benedict uses the term *desidiosus* in tandem with the words *neglegens* and *male viventibus*, showing clearly that passivity can result in spiritual ruin. This early description of monastic life as an energetic race will be repeated many

times in RB, especially by the use of the image of running (see Index) and alacrity (see Index). RB 5 on obedience urges alacrity and RB 43 condemns tardiness. The image in Prol 2 seems to be of a God who moves on, while the sinful person settles down to a willful existence that is progressively distanced from God. Obedience then becomes a matter of "catching up to God." *Inoboedientiae desidiam* is another explicative genitive. Faustus of Riez uses the term *desidiam* to criticize Augustine's theology of the all-sufficiency of grace (*ep.* 1). In the same passage, Faustus uses the phrase *labor oboedientiae* to describe the hard work that a Christian must contribute to the process of salvation. Benedict may not have been alluding to Faustus' letter (ca. A.D. 460), but Prol 4 will show that he shares the same mentality. See Steidle, 8.

3.

For this verse, Benedict returns to *Ps.-Basil,* 1, which speaks of Christ the heavenly king and of spiritual weapons: "I desire to instruct you . . . in the ways you must serve your king." *Vit. patr.* (5.1.9), a source often used by Benedict, has the expression "renounce self-will."

Now then I address my words to you (Ad te ergo nunc mihi sermo dirigitur). The author employs rhetorical means here to attract maximum attention. *Ergo nunc* alerts us to an important message to come. *Mihi* is the only self-reference of this reserved writer (Böckmann, *Perspectiven*, 30).

renounce (abrenuntians) is a baptismal idea occurring in the formula "Do you renounce Satan?" It was used long before Benedict's time (e.g., Ambrose, *Incarn.* 1,2,5). RM Th 18 speaks of monastic life as a refusal to take up again the sins renounced at baptism. *Abrenuntio* was often used by the early monks to mean the wholesale rejection of a worldly lifestyle, so Cassian could term the monastic life as simply *abrenuntiatio* (*conf.* 3.6).

self-will (propriis voluntatibus). RM Thp 40 condemns our own will as "patently unjust," because we are not able to see ourselves objectively as an outside authority can. Benedict does not go that far, but he sometimes transmits harsh strictures on self-will from the Master as in RM 5.12/RB 5.13. As long as Benedict is following the Master closely, that is before RB 8, he invariably calls the monk's own will into question. See *Index:* Will. Nevertheless, in later chapters, the human will of the monk is not automatically suspected and suppressed, as indeed it is not in the Bible (Böckmann, 7.32). Although *propriis voluntatibus* can be translated as "one's own will," I prefer "self-will." The latter is a source of sin for every person, not just monks. Monks are required by

obedience to put their own wills aside on occasion, but they can never *renounce* their own wills, much less "once and for all" *(RB 1980)*.

the Lord Christ, the true king (Domino Christo vero regi). The exalted and even intimidating picture of Christ presented here is typical of Benedict and his time. The sixth century also produced the formidable *pantakrator* in the apses of Byzantine churches. Benedict almost always emphasizes the divinity of Christ and not his humanity. See A. Borias, 3.109-139. See *Index:* Christ.

Lord (Dominus) here clearly refers to Christ, as it often does in RB even when it is used alone. Although it cannot be held that every appearance of *Dominus* in RB refers to Christ (Steidle, 7.90), nevertheless that is the case throughout the Prologue. Benedict thinks almost exclusively of the risen Christ, and he makes little distinction between Christ and the Father. See A. Borias, 7.414-432. See *Index:* Lord.

fight for (militaturus). Although the primary meaning of *militare* in classical Latin was to make war, there was always a secondary meaning "to serve," which came to predominate in the patristic period (Blaise, s.v.). Nevertheless, the term probably retains its martial meaning here, since the verse also speaks of "weapons" of obedience (Prol 3). RB 1.4-5 also speaks of the battle against sin. See A. Borias, 3.109-110. Compared to the RM, Benedict generally seems to retreat from militant attitudes. For RB, the monastic struggle is less against external enemies than a common service of Christ, our Lord. See E. Manning, 3.135-138; C. Mohrmann, 419. Before the disastrous wars of recent decades, Benedictine commentators like Herwegen were more willing to speak of the monastic life in military terms, a taste not shared by our age. See Venchi, 1319–1321. See *Index:* Battle.

4.

when you set out (inchoas bonum). It is also possible to treat this clause as the object of *deposcas:* "Pray most insistently that whatever good work you set out to do will be completed by him" (Lentini, Holzherr, Schmitz, Böckmann). This alternative is grammatically problematic and it involves Benedict in a questionable theological statement that is avoided with the translation preferred here (Vogüé, Steidle, Rochais). Benedict may have wished to qualify his own insistence that the recipient of his Prologue not only listen closely but put it into action (*efficaciter comple*: Prol 1). Hence his claim that *God* "completes" *(perfici)* our good works could be in effect anti-Pelagian, with no emphasis meant for our initiation of those works. If the verse is understood this way, even the alternate translation causes no problems. On the other hand, if Prol 4 is seen as the introduction to Prol 4–45, the

psalm-commentary borrowed from the Master, then Benedict probably wants the emphasis to fall on prayer rather than on the object of prayer, namely, divine grace. Since Prol 5–45 stresses the need for strenuous human effort in the beginning of the spiritual quest, Benedict may want to preempt any criticism of Pelagianism by insisting on previous prayer for divine help. This is the impression given by the first translation, which highlights the preliminary necessity of prayer: "When you set out to do any good work."

Ps.-Basil, 11 has a similar saying: "When you begin some task, first call on the Lord, and do not fail to give thanks when you complete it" *(Quodcumque opus inchoaveris, primo invoca Dominum, et ne desinas gratias agere cum perficeris illud)*. If Benedict intended to emphasize prayer, he would have done better to stay closer to this formulation, which is clearer in both its syntax and its theology than is Prol 4.

with most insistent prayer (instantissima oratione). *Instans* can mean both persistent and pressing. Benedict may be thinking of the nagging, hectoring widow in Luke 18:1-8 or the constant prayer he advocates in RB 4.56 *(orationi frequenter incumbere)* (Böckmann, 7.38-39). See *Index:* Prayer.

5.

At this point Benedict commences copying the Rule of the Master (RM Ths 2-46). The addressee now changes from second person singular to first person plural, that is, from the individual to the community.

may never have to rage (non debet aliquando . . . contristari). *RB 1980* takes unwarranted liberties with this verse, adding "in his goodness" to the verb "deigned," and making "we" the subject of *debet*. Lentini translates *contristari* as "irritated," which is one of the meanings of the word (Blaise, s.v.). This would make the verse virtually identical with the next one, which makes a sharp turn from the warmth of divine filiation to strict judgment. If that is the right interpretation, we should remember that this change is caused by human sin and no change in God (Holzherr, 39). See *Index:* Sadden.

6-7.

By means of the good things he has given us (de bonis suis in nobis). The allusion here is to the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30) (Lentini, 11).

angry father . . . fearsome lord (iratus pater . . . metuendus dominus). The combination of these two figures invokes the image of the austere Roman paterfamilias. Disinheritance was the punishment of sons (v. 6); prison and flogging was for slaves (v. 7) (Lentini, 12). See *Index:* Father, Lord.

wicked slaves (nequissimos servos). In Matthew 18:32 (Vulgate), the unforgiving, though forgiven, slave is called *serve nequam*.

8.

Therefore (ergo) Benedict adds this word to the text of RM, thus making the penalty threatened by the previous verse a strong motive to shake off spiritual lethargy. On the other hand, the author of RB Prol has eliminated the words *ut pigri* ("us lazy-bones") from the first part of RM Ths 5, and *enim* from the biblical quote. The first omission robs the verse of some of its verve, but the second is editorially warranted. Romans 13:11 is a traditional text for the beginning of the Church year, so it is an appropriate quote for the beginning of the Rule (Lentini, 13).

9.

Let us open our eyes (apertis oculis nostris) is a possible allusion to the Transfiguration, where the drowsy disciples are startled by the shining forth of Christ and instructed by the voice from heaven (Luke 9:32). See *Index:* Eye.

divine (deificum) can mean either "made by God" or "making divine." Blaise (s.v.) thinks the word has the first meaning in this case. Most translators take a middle route and use the neutral term "divine." Vogüé, 1.415, thinks that the word refers to Scripture. It is not impossible that the term refers to deification, which is one of the main themes in Greek spirituality, but the word usually has a weaker sense in Latin spirituality.

astonished ears (attonitis auribus). Lentini, 13, points out that the root meaning of *attonitus* is "deafened by thunder," but the weakened sense is simply "alert." Still, if one agrees that the Transfiguration is part of the background of this verse, there is place for an element of awe and wonder that the word "alert" does not convey.

daily (cotidie). Psalm 94 is indeed recited every day in the classical Benedictine Office of Vigils (RB 9.3; 10.10; RM 32.14).

10.

This biblical passage has been added to the text of the Master. A connection might be made to the Parable of the Sower, especially in the rocky ground that resists rootage and precludes perseverance (Mark 4:16-17). The hardened heart is a common scriptural metaphor. See *Index:* Heart.

12.

Here begins the commentary on Psalm 34, which extends to Prol 18. This psalm was a favorite for catechesis in the early Church, for such

verses as "Look to him and be radiant, so your faces will never be ashamed" (Baptism); "Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy is the one who takes refuge in the Lord" (Eucharist). For a paleochristian baptismal catechesis based on this psalm, see Peter Chrysologus, *ep.* 62.

13.

The Master accentuates the already dramatic text of John with the words "life" and "death." RM 91.33 has a further interpretation of this text: "Run while you still have the light permitting you to take care of your future, lest the darkness of death overtake you and put your negligence on trial." The Master also changes John's "walk" *(ambulate)* to "run" *(currite)*. This change is habitual in the sermons of two great Gallic monk/bishops of the period: Faustus of Riez *ep.* 1 and 10; Caesarius of Arles, *serm.* 130.2; 168.8; 197.4; 209.1.

run (currite). The concept of running is dear to Benedict, who uses it four times in the Prologue alone (13,22,44,49; see *Index:* Run). Although he makes allowance for a variety of gifts in the monastic community (2.31), he expects everyone to exercise the alacrity of fervor and love (Lentini, 14; see *Index:* Alacrity). In fact, the running of Prol 13,22 and 44 constitutes a virtual framework surrounding the commentary on Psalms 34 and 15. Each of these passages refers to the flight from sin and death, but the running of Prol 49 is much more joyful: it is running in the Holy Spirit and not just out of fear. See Fattorini, 457–483; Kardong, 6.155-172; see also note on Prol 2, "inertia."

darkness of death overtake you (tenebrae mortis vos comprehendant). The Johannine metaphor (12:35) concerns the need to believe before it is too late and one dies. There is a need for haste, but it is not acute, so "walking" is sufficient. But the idea of darkness "overtaking" one is also found in John 1:5, where it has not "overcome" *(non comprehenderunt)* the Word. Here darkness means evil, and that is how RM/RB interpret John 12:35 in this passage. Hence the running is a headlong flight from evil.

14.

Benedict's Prologue bears a resemblance to a seventh-century baptismal discourse (Morin, 1.385-402). The sixth sermon of this discourse contains a similar dramatic dialogue based on Psalm 34:13-14. Another such dialogue is found in Augustine, *in ps.* 33, 16-18. The biblical Parable of the Vineyard Workers (Matt 20:1-16) may lie behind this verse; the crowd in that story consists entirely of workers, all of whom eagerly seek work. Another biblical reference may be Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 8–9.

his worker (operarium suum) is an expression of the monastic vocation as a special invitation from God to collaborate in his work (Lentini, 15). Since the worker is called "out of a multitude," this may seem like a symbol of special vocation, but the context does not suggest that meaning. If it is a baptismal catechesis, it is addressed to all Christians. And since it offers nothing less than life (v. 15), it is addressed to all persons without exception. See *Index:* Work.

16.

God (Deus). Benedict replaces "Lord" *(Dominus)* here as he does in 2.6; 7.11,20,29,67 to downplay the prominence given to Christ by the Master, at least as regards roles traditionally ascribed to the Father (Vogüé, 1.64). His argument is based on the assumption that "Lord" in RM/RB refers to Christ. The Psalmist uses "Lord" throughout Psalm 34 with no thought of Christ, so RM is more consistent in retaining the term here. See Borias, 7.414-432; see *Index:* Lord.

you (tu). The switch to the second singular for a direct, intimate dialogue between the soul and God gives this passage a fresh and lively quality. The simple, unvarnished reply "I do" has the same effect (Lentini, 16). Psalm 34 itself uses the third person.

17.

If . . . life (Si . . . vitam). This conditional clause is added to the psalm, which does not promise eternal life.

seek peace and pursue it (inquire pacem et sequere eam). Schmitz has this elegant translation: "cherche la paix avec ardeur et persévérance," which makes it clear that the pursuit of peace requires more than a mere burst of initial sentiment. What is needed is longterm, dogged effort to "make peace," that is, do those deeds that build a solid human foundation for true peace. Peace is the objective aspect of love, and Benedict mentions them in the same breath in 4.71-73 and 65.11. Those who seek meaning and love in life must concern themselves with objective justice (Holzherr, 42). See *Index:* Peace.

18.

my eyes will be on you (oculi mei super vos). The divine gaze can be intimidating to the sinner, a point that is driven home forcefully in RM 10.10-13/RB 7.10-14. But to be continually under the watchful guardianship of God can be a great consolation (Lentini, 17). See *Index:* Eye.

before you even invoke me (et antequam me invocetis) is a composite of Isaiah 58:9 and 65:24, which derives from *pass. Juliani et Bas.* 12. This expression of the precedence of divine grace is analogous to Prol 9:

"Open our eyes to the light that comes from God." It should relieve any anxieties that Benedict was Pelagian (see note on Prol 4). See *Index:* Grace.

19.

dearest brothers (fratres carissimi). Benedict adds *carissimi* to RM Ths 15. This is the only case where he adds a modifier to the term *fratres* (Vogüé 1.417).

voice (vox) could mean "word" and refer to the preceding quote, but the evident warmth of the whole section depends on the personal element. Benedict hears the living voice of God/Christ in Scripture.

20.

the way to life (viam vitae). RM Prol 10–14 and Th 3-12 use the image of the journey (Vogüé, 8.321). Benedict often uses *via* and similar terms to convey the sense of the spiritual life as dynamic process (see note on Prol 2). Psalm 16:11 speaks of the ways of life, but the Psalmist thanks God for saving his earthly life, while RB Prol is thinking about eternal, heavenly life with God.

21.

The "interpolated" manuscript tradition, and especially Ms Hatton 48, add the words "shoe your feet with the boots of gospel peace" *(calceatis in praeparatione evangelii pacis pedibus),* a line directly from Ephesians 6:15. The effect is to make a true citation of the scriptural allusion found in the clause "clothed then with . . . works" (Vogüé, 1.418-419). Benedict has also reverted more closely than the Master to the original word order of 1 Thessalonians 2:12: "Who called you into his reign and glory."

Let us belt our waist (succinctis . . . lumbis nostris). Since ancient garments were voluminous rather than form-fitting, they had to be gathered with a belt or cords to facilitate free movement. In the present image, the belt is "faith and the performance of good works." *RB 1980* has "clothed with faith" which bypasses the alien custom, but also misses the point. To have the "loins girt" is biblical language for readiness to obey God. The image goes back to the Israelite exodus from Egypt ("loins girt, sandals on your feet, staff in hand," Exod 12:22), which takes on an eschatological connotation in the NT. Thus Luke 12:35: "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like (servants) waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast." Isaiah 11:5 has "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins." In this case of synonymous parallelism, righteousness equals faithfulness; waist equals loins.

faith that leads to the performance of good works (fide et observantia bonorum actuum). Rather than a simple pair, this combination looks more like a theological progression: faith issuing in good works. The whole point of the psalm-commentary is precisely that the candidate translate good intentions into action. St. Benedict seems to use *fides* in the traditional Hebrew sense of obedience to God's law rather than in the Pauline sense of total trust in God. See Bhaldraithe, 2.89-111. See *Index:* Faith.

into his kingdom (in regnum suum). The alternate reading *in regno suo* would mean that we will see him in his kingdom. That is true, but it is not the reading of the best mss (Lentini, 20).

with the Gospel as our guide (per ducatum Evangelii). After the commentaries on both Psalms 34 and 15 (Prol 21,33–34), Benedict refers to the Gospel. Since he has quoted the OT exclusively in the commentaries, this may appear to be an effort to Christianize these passages. That is unlikely, since RM/RB, and the early Church in general, see the entire Bible as the word of Christ. For them, it is not illogical to have the Lord Christ enunciate psalm passages. "Gospel" here refers to the whole Bible. See Vogüé, 22.186-188. This reference to the Bible as our guide forms an inclusion with RB 73.3: "What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?" See *Index:* Gospel.

22.

tent (tabernaculo) is a reference to Psalm 15:1 (Prol 23) and based on the early nomadic history of Israel. Although this tent is not the movable one of the Exodus, the theme of running recalls that long trek. The divine *tabernaculum* is mentioned four times in this part of the Prologue (22,23,24 and 39). While the Lord's tent here refers to heaven, the Word of God left heaven precisely to "pitch his tent" (*eskaenosen*: John 1:14) among us. See *Index:* Tent.

run (curritur) features prominently in the introductions (Prol 13,22) and the conclusion (Prol 44) of the psalm commentary. See *Index:* Run.

good deeds (bonis actibus). The main thrust of the Prologue is the need to translate good will into practical Christianity. Benedict is aware that divine grace is indispensable to the journey (see notes on Prol 4,9 and 18) and that the goal is repose (*habitare*: dwell) with God, but he sees monastic existence as a vigorous struggle. Paul insists that all the "willing and running" (Rom 9:16 Vulgate: *volentis et currentis*) in the world are futile without grace (Holzherr, 43). See *Index:* Action.

23.

the Prophet (propheta). Benedict often calls the psalmist "the Prophet," although he doubtless considered King David the author of the Book of Psalms.

25.

justly (justitiam). In the psalms, and the Jewish Bible in general, *sedekah/justitia* does not refer to an abstract, ethical standard but rather to the Covenant. In Semitic thought, covenant justice means faithfulness between partners, in this case God and the Israelites, in the pact. See Kardong, 16.43-73. Benedict probably uses the word here in the more general sense of upright conduct. See *Index:* Justice.

26.

fraud (dolum). RSV has "slander."

candidly (in corde suo). Literally, "in his heart," but the meaning seems to be truth enunciated from the core of the speaker's being, "from the depths of the heart" (Schmitz, 7). It could also mean there is no discrepancy between what one thinks and what one says. See *Index:* Heart.

27.

slander (obprobrium). RSV has "takes up a reproach," but the Vulgate *accepit* (accepts) indicates that the sin here is passive: receiving evil gossip about another. Thus one does no evil to another nor permits evil to be done against him (Lentini, 21). Steidle, 5.57, keeps the active voice: *nicht schmäht* (do not reproach).

28.

Even though Psalm 15:4 is expanded in the first part of Prol 28, all the words are still used: *malignum . . . conspectibus . . . deduxit ad nihilum*. It is a very skillful adaptation that blends smoothly into Psalm 137:9, which makes up the second part of the verse. Far from original, this interpretation of Psalm 137:9 is found in: Origen, *hom. in Num*. 22.20; *c. Cels.* 7.22; Hilary of Poitiers, *in ps.* 136.14; Ambrose, *paenit*. 2.106; Jerome, *epist*. 22.6; *in ps*.; Augustine, *in ps*. 136.21; *conf*. 8.12.28; Cassian, *conf*. 6.13. List given in *RB 1980,* 162.

annihilates (deduxit in nihilum) may give the impression that the struggle against the Evil One is easy. It is not, but neither is the Christian without powerful resources. Christ is our principal ally, and his assistance assures victory. As Matthew 12:43-45 warns, it is not enough merely to expel the demon from the house; if we do not fill it with Christ, seven more demons will take it over (Cassian, *conf*. 5.16; Holzherr, 44).

wicked one, the devil (malignum diabolum). In Psalm 15:4, the "evil one" is a human enemy. In the just man's eyes, the "reproach is despised" (RSV). RM/RB combines this verse with Psalm 137:9, which speaks of vengeance against the enemy by the hideous means of smashing their infants on the rocks. This combination is spiritualized into the ascetical/mystical battle against temptation. Now the enemy is Satan, and the rock is Christ. The biblical basis for this last comparison is 1 Corinthians 10:4, which speaks of Christ as the rock Moses struck in the desert to draw water. This is one of the few references to the devil in RB. In contrast to the Master, for whom the devil is everywhere, and especially dominant in the "world" outside the monastery, Benedict is remarkably restrained on this subject. See Kardong, 11.41-62; 10.3-11. See *Index:* Devil.

from the sight of his heart (a conspectibus cordis sui). Cassiodorus has an interesting Christological interpretation of this verse in his commentary on Psalm 137 (PL 70.110): "Christ reduces him to nothing in his sight when he says: 'Get behind me, Satan; you shall not tempt the Lord, your God'" (Lentini, 22).

incipient thoughts (parvulos cogitationes). In Psalm 137:9, *parvulos* is used of Babylonian babies to be destroyed. The word could mean that here, too, and most translations retain it. "Brood" does not connote weakness or negligibility, but a nascent state. Temptation should be dealt with before it matures. This is clear from RB 4.50: "As soon as wrongful thoughts come into your heart, dash them against Christ and disclose them to your spiritual father." See *RB 1980*, 475, for a good discussion of the allegory involved in Prol 28. *Cogitationes* literally means "thoughts" and probably has roots in the Greek tradition of spiritual direction. For Evagrius and Cassian, sin is primarily a matter of the mind, and spirituality consists largely of discerning one's *logismoi* so as to eliminate harmful attitudes before they lead to action. See Kardong, 14.90; H. Bacht; see *Index:* Thought.

29.

The verse begins with *timentes Dominum* (those fearing the Lord) of Psalm 15:4, but it departs from the psalm to discuss once again the need for divine grace in Christian life. The corollary is the danger of Pharisaic Pelagianism, e.g., pride in human performance without reference to God.

*the fear of the Lord (*timentes Dominum) is a major theme in the Jewish Bible, where it is virtually synonymous with piety and fidelity to the Covenant. This positive connotation continues into the New Testament, where it is sometimes used for the awe and wonder experienced at

Jesus' power (Mark 4:41). In the early Church, "God-fearers" were those Gentiles affiliated with the Jewish synagogue (Acts 10:2), who were a prime target of the first mission preachers like Paul. Benedict knows that fear can be crippling (7.67-70), but fear of the Lord remains a positive concept for him. His view of God as the awesome judge (7.10-14) leads him to the creation of a reverential community where all persons are honored out of fear of God (31.2; 36.7; 53.7; 66.4). See Kardong, 4.84-86; 12.25-50; see *Index:* Fear.

good performance (bona observantia). The term *observantia,* like its cognate *observatio,* can mean a respectful but detached scrutiny of an object. That is clearly not the meaning here, nor was it in Prol 21, but precisely the reverse: active involvement in good works (Blaise, s.v.). The translation "observance" would better suit the jargon of modern religious life, where it refers to faithful performance of rules and customs. The meaning here is broader. Note that Benedict does not ask us to deny the good in ourselves but to give the glory to God. See *Index:* Action.

30.

to your name give glory (sed nomini tuo da gloriam). The psalmist in Psalm 115:1-2 argues that God should work mightily on behalf of Israel, but not for the glory of the latter. Rather, God should do so to protect his own reputation (glory), for unless he does, the other nations will doubt his power: "Where is their God?" The author of the Prologue only uses the verse because it contrasts divine and human prestige.

heap praise (magnificent). Benedict is quite reticent on the subject of prayer. Only three short chapters (19, 20 and 52) treat of private prayer, and nowhere does he offer a formal treatise on prayer. Yet a verse like this one tells us a lot about his view of prayer: it involves the recognition and open acknowledgment of the Lord's action in our lives. This is worth keeping in mind when evaluating a Rule which puts so much emphasis on humility (RB 7). It gives God no glory to deny his achievement through our agency. See *Index:* Prayer.

32.

Benedict replaces 2 Corinthians 12:1 (RM Ths 28): "If there is to be boasting, it is not up to me to do it" (RSV). The verse used by Benedict, namely, 2 Corinthians 10:17, allows "prayerful boasting," whereas the other passage does not. Second Corinthians is much taken up with this question. Since the Corinthians are showing disdain for Paul's personal gifts, should he bear this in silence and possibly jeopardize the gospel? The Apostle reveals himself as a person with no inclination to masochism.

33.

At this point, Benedict eliminates RM Ths 29-30, which reproduces Psalm 15:4-5. He probably considers the discussion of oaths, usury and bribes somewhat irrelevant. Yet Benedict pays a price for this surgery, for the last stanza of the psalm would have provided a lead-in to the text from Matthew: "He who does these things shall never be moved" (Ps 15:5 RSV). As it is, "Thus" is rather gratuitous (Vogüé, 1.421-422). Nevertheless, "who does them" echos Psalm 15:5, and the immovable house on a rock recalls "will not be moved" of the same verse.

whoever hears my words and does them (qui audit verba mea et facit ea) admirably sums up the main teachings of the Prologue: Listen to the word of the Lord and put it into practice. The passage serves as the conclusion to the commentary on Psalm 15, as it does for Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (7.24-25). See *Index:* Action.

35.

Now the Prologue changes its tone, moving from the attraction of the Lord's dwelling to the threat of his punishment if the Christian wastes the time given for amendment (Lentini, 26). See *Index:* Threat.

Having finished his discourse (Haec complens). The Master is probably influenced here by the next verse of Matthew (7:26): "When (Jesus) had finished these words. . . ." Benedict omits the Master's imaginative addition: "The Lord is silent" *(Dominus tacet).*

36.

A lively consciousness of life as a limited, ephemeral opportunity for amendment is what is meant by "fear of the Lord" (Holzherr, 46).

Therefore (Ideo). The connection with the preceding sentence lies in not losing the chance that each new day brings for conversion (Lentini, 26). Benedict drops the repetition of *cottidie* (daily) of RM Ths 36, which makes the point more forcefully.

truce (indutias). In classical Latin, the word means a truce in warfare, but some scholars think it has a weakened sense here: "delay" (Blaise, s.v.). Since the author returns to the image of battle in v. 40, "truce" seems preferable.

days of life (huius vitae dies). *RB 1980* has "our lifespan has been lengthened," which is certainly correct, but departs rather far from the literal meaning, which is clear enough.

37.

Patience . . . repentance (patientia . . . paenitentiam) is probably a

conscious alliteration, since *patientia* is also used in an obvious, elaborate alliteration in RM Ths 46/RB Prol 50. The specific type of patience meant here is called *makrothumia* (Rom 2:4), which means allowing another the time to develop or change (Holzherr, 46). The Vulgate of Romans 2:4 has *benignitas*, not *patientia*. See *Index:* Patience.

38.

benevolence (pius) on the part of the Lord is shown in his reluctance to settle accounts immediately with the sinner.

39.

The question is—will we fulfill the duties of an inhabitant? (sed si compleamus habitatoris). The important Ms Hatton 48 ends the Prologue here by adding the words "we will be heirs of the kingdom of heaven." This not only makes a suitable closing (much like Prol 50), but it makes some sense of this cryptic sentence. Words such as "and we will do so" should probably be understood just before "providing" (*RB 1980,* 164). The content is not in doubt: it is the main point of the Prologue, namely, that the dweller in God's kingdom *act* righteously (see Prol 35). Steidle and Schmitz take *compleamus* as a hortative (let us fulfill), but that is not correct, given the conjunction *si* (if) (Lentini, 27). The "duties of an inhabitant" can be seen as anticipatory, since the wayfarer is not yet in the heavenly home, but as Origen (*hom. cant.* 2.26) notes, "God walks in the soul, and the soul emigrates to God" (Holzherr, 47).

40.

The literal translation is: "Our bodies should wage the battle of holy obedience," but this is awkward. The fact that some manuscripts transpose "hearts and bodies," while others change the form of *militanda* (battle) from a gerundive to a future participle, seems to suggest a different solution. Moreover, the two different translations have a slightly different meaning. The battle is either obedience itself or preparation for obedience. The battle of obedience, of course, is not against the superior, but against one's sinful ego that resists outside interference. See *Index:* Battle.

our hearts and our bodies (corda nostra et corpora) means the entire person. Nonetheless, the demand for practical action in the Prologue suggests that physical obedience is important to Benedict. The verse also points to a need for personal integration for spiritual progress in a world which tends to fragment the person. Obedience can help us marshal our forces in this struggle (Holzherr, 47). See *Index:* Body, Heart. Verses 40-50 are missing in the very early Ms Hatton 48 and the

"interpolated" mss dependent on it, and scholars take the omission seriously. Some, like Masai and Manning, consider the short form original, but RM Ths and the best RB ms (Saint Gall 914) both continue for several more verses. RB Prol 46–49 place Benedict's personal stamp on the psalm-commentary, and their loss would be irreplaceable. See Vogüé, 27.7-42; 271-309.

41.

the help of his grace (gratiae suae . . . adjutorium). The rather literal translation given here makes this look like an hypostasis or personification. Such might seem strange to us, but RM Thp 71 and 2.21 have similar constructions. More tellingly, *Visio Pauli* (9), a document that RM quotes very frequently, explicitly addresses "grace" and "help" as servants of God (Vogüé, 8.324-325). Lentini, however, maintains that *jubere* (command) has the weakened sense that it often has in the Liturgy: e.g., *Jube, domne, benedicere*: "My lord, bless me!" Those who do not accept the personification theory usually ignore this verb in their translation. See *Index:* Grace.

Let us pray (Rogemus). Just as in Prol 3–4, Benedict immediately follows the demand for obedience (40) with a plea for grace. Whereas Prol 3–4 are original, this verse is copied from RM Ths 41. Both authors agree that obedience is impossible without grace.

that which we cannot accomplish by nature (Et quod minus habet in nos natura possibile). The term *minus* means *not* in this passage, as it often does in Late Latin (Lentini, 28). Although the sentence could be read to say that we should pray for whatever we cannot manage on our own (Prol 4), it probably means that obedience (Prol 40) is only possible through God's grace. *Quod* (that which) could also mean "because," but it is more likely a relative pronoun referring to obedience in the preceding verse.

42.

The theme of Prol 35–38 is repeated here: time is wasting; act effectively for the good of your own soul. But the atmosphere in v. 42 is rendered extremely somber by the mention of the punishment of hell.

43.

This verse sounds redundant because the Latin repeats the verb *vacat*. The sense of urgency is emphasized at the expense of style.

light of life (per hanc lucis vitam). Literally, "life of light," but the opposite connotation is clear: the life that remains before the darkness of death descends on us. See Prol 13 and John 12:35. See *Index:* Life, Light.

45.

we must establish (constituenda est . . . nobis). Although the construction is a straightforward gerundive of necessity, translators rarely take it that way (*RB 1980,* "we intend"; Steidle, Schmitz, "we wish"; Rochais, "we are going to"). Because the psalm-commentary is aimed at all Christians with its demands for practical implementation of the Gospel, it is not clear why one need do this in a monastery.

Lord's . . . service (dominici . . . servitii). The term *servire* is usually applied to mutual aid by Benedict (e.g., 35.1,6,13; 36.1,4; 53.18). Far from obstructing the service of the Lord, mutual service is the primary way cenobites serve the Lord. Since the Lord here is divine, this service is enduring; one does not graduate from this school. Conversely, the genitive *dominici* may be taken as subjective and mean Christ's salvation or service of us. This also never ceases. See Böckmann, 7.47. Against this last suggestion, the term *schola* meant rather different things for Greek and Latin spirituality. For the former, it had a passive, contemplative connotation. For the latter, it referred to active, aggressive asceticism, as in the sermons of Faustus of Riez , which may well have influenced Benedict through the Master. The use of the energetic term *militare* in Prol 3,40 and 1.2 seems to favor this view. See B. Steidle, 7.397-406. See *Index:* Battle.

school (schola) can have several meanings in Late Latin, some of which apply directly to monasticism. See Overview (31–32) for full discussion. See *Index:* School.

46.

Verses 46-49 are inserted into RM Ths by Benedict, and they are his most personal and distinctive contribution to the Prologue. As with Prol 1–4, they are marked by a high percentage of *hapax legoumena* (words used nowhere else in the document) and by careful composition (Vogüé, 1.423). These verses reveal a personality of great delicacy and sensitivity (Lentini, 31).

grim or oppressive (asperum, grave). Unlike some of the earlier monastic writers who thought that artificial trials should be imposed on monks in order to produce compunction or humility (e.g., RM 90.36,40,47,71), Benedict consciously tries to preclude unnecessary suffering in the community (35.13; 38.10). See *Index:* Sadness. True, Benedict sometimes regrets the weakness of his times, which cannot match the ascetic heroism of a previous monastic "golden age" (18.10; 35.13; 66.5). Yet he does not want to crush newcomers before they have found their monastic legs (Holzherr, 48–49). RB 58.8, however, does

view some hardship as salvific: "all the harsh and rough things that lead to God."

create (constituros). In contrast to theory, *constituere* and *institutione* (Prol 45–46) have to do with the legislation of a concrete mode of life.

47.

*in a given case (*aequitatis . . . ratione), literally, "reasons of equity." Steidle takes this as a genitive of explanation: "reason, that is, fairness." Since the topic is strictness and indulgence, Benedict may be saying that he prefers the latter approach. Yet this has its limits, since it may harm the rights of others, the common good, and that is the usual meaning of *aequitas.* Böckmann, 7.1015, quoting TLL 1, says that it means doing the right thing in a particular case. This seems to be the meaning here. See *Index:* Reason.

charity (caritatis). Love appears for the first time in the Rule. The word and the reality are not at all prominent in RM, but in the insertion Prol 46–49 love is the key idea (*dilectio*, Prol 49). And while it may not be a pervasive theme in RB, it does appear at critical junctures, e.g., RB 7.67-70 and RB 72. Since Benedict proposes to maintain charity through discipline, this must be "tough love," meant to last the long haul (Böckmann, 7.52).

48.

do not . . . flee (non . . . refugias). The Latin returns to the second person singular, last seen in Prol 16. The effect is to enhance the considerable warmth of these verses (Lentini, 32).

path of salvation (viam salutis). Since Benedict is now discussing the monastic life and its rigors, this phrase refers to the monastic path. Such language was not unknown in the monastic tradition (see Cassian, *conf.* 3.15; *hist. mon.* 9) but the primary reference must be Matthew 7:15: "Narrow is the path that leads to life." That, of course, is a reference to Christianity, which was soon called "the way" (Acts 9:2). Here again the Prologue seems to blur the distinction between Christian and monastic life. We might prefer the more precise language of *"a* way of salvation," but that would not suit Benedict's purpose. Nor would a strictly Matthean view be useful, for Matthew 7:15 never indicates that the path will become easier. Since Benedict has a dynamic view of spirituality, he must present hope for progress. See *Index:* Way.

narrow . . . outset (angusto initio), literally, "the way can only be undertaken with a narrow beginning." Benedict does not claim that the monastic or Christian road will broaden. The change will be in the person, not the system.

49.

monastic life (conversationis). This much controverted word is certainly based on *convertere*, to turn. Since conversion is a key notion in Christian life, and monastic life was seen as a turning from the world, the scribes often corrected *conversatio* to *conversio*. But the word actually means a lifestyle, a "turning-around" in a given milieu. For the monk, it means the external behavior befitting that calling. Combined with *fides* (faith), it refers to the whole monastic enterprise, inside and out. The combination occurs in Cassian, *conf.* 3.15; Pachomius, *pr. et leg.* 14; *reg. or.* 21. Its connection here with *processus* points to ongoing behavior, not an abrupt conversion. See *RB 1980,* 359–364; A. Wathen, 1.1-44.

faith (fidei). Although *conversatio et fides* was a traditional combination, Benedict may want to show that he fully understands that monastic progress is not only a matter of effort. Faith is ultimately God's gift, as is love *(dilectio)*. Faith for St. Benedict is the biblical trust in God alone, rather than correct propositional belief. See Bhaldraithe, 2.89-111; see *Index:* Faith.

our hearts will swell with unspeakable sweetness of love (dilatato corde inenarrabili dilectionis dulcedine). Many translators (Lentini, Vogüé, Steidle, Schmitz, Rochais, but not *RB 1980*) join the last three words with the running that follows. Perhaps they do so in order to yoke the swelled heart and running that appears in Psalm 119:32: "I have run the way of your commands, since you have enlarged my understanding" *(Viam mandatorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum)*. But it appears that Benedict has created here a deliberate alliteration: *dilatato . . . dilectionis dulcedine.* Note that God enlarges the mind in the psalm and this is also implied in Prol 49. See *Index:* Heart, Run.

unspeakable sweetness of love (inenarrabili dilectionis dulcedine) is an example of the "epexegetical genitive" (Steidle), with the terms defining and enhancing each other. In Prol 47, Benedict spoke of a love fire-tested by discipline. Here he quickly fills out the picture with love that is pure delight. The reference to the ineffability of this love alludes to 1 Corinthians 2:9 (RB 4.77), which avers that no one can describe heavenly enjoyment. The sweet love of Prol 49 is from God, but it is not for the future. Rather, it is a reasonable expectation for a monastic Christian in this life. Thus Benedict identifies himself with the realized eschatology of Cassian and against the purely future eschatology of the Master. Kardong, 10.100-104. See *Index:* Love.

race along the way of God's commandments (curritur in via mandatorum Dei). Now the running of the Prologue (13,22,44), which has hith-

erto been a flight from evil and doom, becomes a race toward God, fueled by the powerful attraction of God's love for us. See *Index:* Run.

50.

Benedict returns to the Master's text after an insertion of four verses (46-49). The effect is to end the Prologue on a more somber, but still deeply hopeful, note. The Master promises the monk only suffering in this life, but it will end in heavenly joy. No one can accuse him of false proselytizing, but his psychology leaves something to be desired. RB Prol 46–49 remedies this. The biblical overtones of this verse are multiple. In Acts 2:42, the first Christians "persevered in the teaching of the Apostles," which ultimately came from Christ. According to 2 John 9, "whoever remains in this doctrine has the Father and the Son." And of course "Christ became obedient unto death" (Phil 2:8).

his teaching . . . doctrine (ipsius . . . magisterio . . . eius doctrinam). If the interpolated vv. 46-49 are removed, the reference is to Christ *(dominici)* in Prol 45. Christ is the divine person named in Prol 50.

participate in the passion of Christ through patience (passionibus Christi per patientiam participemur). "Sufferings" would be a more accurate translation of "passionibus," but "passion" is used to maintain the strong alliteration of the Latin (which includes *perseverantes* from the preceding clause). Whoever wrote this sentence took a great deal of care with it. Of course, we cannot claim to suffer with the same efficacy for the whole world as Christ did in his passion. The Master calls the monk a martyr in RM 7.59 *(velut martyrio)* but Benedict carefully omits the phrase. Yet Colossians 1:24 is not afraid to say: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church."

patience (patientia) is a primary virtue for Benedict. Its connection to Christ's passion (*pati*: to suffer) removes it from the realm of Stoic determinism. RB 7.35 presents patience in the face of injustice, which can befall even monks. More common is the stress inherent in living in close community with a variety of characters (2.31). Cassian sees such a shared life as primarily penitential (*conf.* 9.9), but Benedict is more positive. In 72.5, a chapter on love, he urges the monks to "support the physical and moral defects of one another with the greatest patience." Hence the weaknesses of the individuals are seen as a unifying factor, because they need mutual help and forbearance. In this final sentence of the Prologue, patience is presented as *the* doorway to the kingdom of God. For cenobitic monks, committed to lifelong perseverance, patience means holding the course to the end. See Casey, 7.1-23; Borias, 19.41-51. See *Index:* Patience.

deserve to be his companions in his kingdom (in regno eius mereamur consortes). Kingdom is a frequent NT term. Indeed, Jesus preaches much more about the kingdom of God than about himself. Romans 8:17 is close to Prol 50: "coheirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so as to be glorified with him." Although "kingdom" is impersonal, "companions" is not, and along with "participate," it keeps Prol 50 from reification. By the same token, one can "deserve" a thing, but only a person (God) can invite us to share his reign. See *Index:* King.

Prologue Overview

A. Introduction

The Prologue is generally considered one of the finest parts of Benedict's Rule. From its first words, "Listen, O my son!", it features stirring and memorable sayings that have become part of the Benedictine heritage. While the Prologue has always been a rich source for monastic sermons and devotional works, the purpose here is to clarify the literary, historical and doctrinal features of the treatise, so as to provide a foundation for intelligent piety.

1. Structure and Sources

To begin, it must be recognized that the Prologue, for the most part, is not an original work. Benedict has expropriated a commentary on Psalms 15 and 34 from the Introduction of the Rule of the Master (= RM). This block of forty verses (RM Ths 2-46; RB Prol 5–45,50) constitutes the main bulk of Benedict's Prologue; he has added a few verses at the beginning and the end (Prol 1–4; 46–49), which give the material a distinctive framing. Of these additions, Prol 1–4 is dependent on an anonymous treatise known as Pseudo-Basil (see note 1). Prol 46–49 is a fully personal creation of Benedict; it is very important as a statement of his basic spiritual vision, but the Prologue as a whole is more traditional than original.

2. Literary Genre

The Prologue is a true "prologue" in that it is an introduction to the main document, but quite distinct from it in genre. While the Rule itself is mostly a dispassionate arrangement of practical cenobitical life, the Prologue is a warm, engaging allocution addressed to an individual. The occasion seems to be one of initiation, whether that of baptism or monastic profession.

In the first verse, the author calls himself a "master" and a "father," which are reminiscent of the master/disciple language employed in Egyptian semi-eremitical circles. Certain characteristic features of that

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In the first verse, the author calls himself a "master" and a "father," which are reminiscent of the master/disciple language employed in Egyptian semi-eremitical circles. Certain characteristic features of that

tradition are in evidence, such as an emphasis on the discernment of spiritual "thoughts" (*logismoi*: see note 28) and a great interest in dynamic progress in the spiritual life (see notes 2, 13 and 49). Still, the "master" immediately turns his "disciple" over to Christ in Prol 2, and it is the Lord himself who is the teacher throughout the psalm commentary.

The biblical allusion of Prol 1 is to Proverbs (4:1,10,20), one of the wisdom books, and the Prologue has other connections to that literature as well (see note 1). Prol 14 in particular invokes the image of Lady Wisdom seeking her disciples in the crowds. This has caused some to see here a reference to the special vocation of monks, but Prol 14 also alludes to Christ (see note 14), who calls all persons to follow him. Every Christian has a special vocation and is a personal disciple of Christ. The NT also calls Christ our wisdom (see Matt 11:19; Luke 7:35).

The Prologue also bears resemblances to a baptismal sermon from the early Church. In fact, a sermon from roughly the same time and place as RM/RB (South Italy, seventh century), comments precisely on Psalms 15 and 34 (see note 14), which were favorites for this purpose because of their dialogical character. E. Manning, 5.61-73, has claimed that the entire doctrinal section (RM Prol; l–10; RB Prol; l–7) is an adapted baptismal sermon, but this seems unlikely. Yet it must be admitted that entrance into the Church and the monastery were virtually synonymous for many in the patristic period.

Another possible connection to baptismal homilies may be seen in Prol 9, which speaks of the divine light. From earliest times, the Church spoke of baptism as "enlightenment" (*photismos*: Justin, *apol.* 61.12-13; 65.1), a movement from the darkness of sin into the light of Christ. The Prologue of John's Gospel is the fundamental starting place for this imagery, but the Greek taste for light mysticism ensured the theme a great future in Hellenistic Christianity.

Origen's spirituality is saturated with this view of divine communication: "God teaches by shining into the soul who learns from him and by enlightening the spirit with his own word" (*Job frag.* 22.2). Origen's intellectual, biblical orientation is plain in this passage, whereas other Greek Fathers speak of the divine light as love: "I feel the love of God in an ineffable way; it can be felt rather than expressed" (Basil, *reg.* 2.24-30; see Holzherr, 40–41).

Attractive as it is from the standpoint of Christian spirituality, the assimilation of monastic profession to baptism is also problematic. The danger is an elitist ideology that posits an inner circle of monastic Christians who have actualized what ordinary Christians have achieved only in potential terms. This is quite blatant in the Rule of the Master, but Benedict manages to tiptoe around these unsound ideas (see "schola" below).

We will give the last word here to B. Neunhauser ("Leben aus der Taufe"):

> Today, many are wary of the traditional metaphor of monastic profession as a second baptism, for it seems to relativize the sacrament, and it also sounds like self-salvation. But the notion probably stems from Origen's rich and complex view of Christian life as dynamic growth. For Origen, the original sacrament must be merely the beginning of a lifelong process of growth, culminating in the final union with God. This can be expressed by various series: white, red, green martyrdom; baptism by water, fire, desire. If monastic profession is seen as an adult decision to pursue a serious life of spiritual growth by means of embracing Christ's cross, then it avoids the charges of elitism, etc., and fits well into the dynamic process-theology of Origen.

This reference to dynamic spirituality points to a major theme of the Prologue.

B. "A little less talk and a lot more action."

If there is a single master-theme in the Prologue, it is the need for action. The first verse states it succinctly: Accept my words and translate them into action! Throughout the exhortation, the listener is urged to take concrete steps to put the doctrine, Christian and monastic, into energetic practice. A religion such as Christianity, with its huge body of subtle and complex doctrines, runs the risk of getting bogged down in a morass of speculation; conversely, it can float around as a cloud of irrelevant piety. The Prologue takes a much more hardheaded line, demanding that we prove our religious convictions by solid deeds of fidelity to God.

The summons to action takes several different forms, but the first and most basic one is a call for obedience. This idea, unfashionable to the modern mind, is made even less attractive by the flat charge that we are sunk in a swamp of *dis*obedience from which we must pull free so as to turn back to God (see note 2). Obedience is probably the central cenobitic virtue, but the Prologue is talking about something even more basic, namely, the general disobedience of sin. It is the condition of every person addressed by the call of God. The Prologue distances itself from propaganda and proselytism by avoiding all forms of flattery. We are bluntly warned that we are miserable sinners who must take this last chance to reform or be lost.

The consequences of a failure to respond are spelled out in profusion by the Prologue as disinheritance (6), darkness (13), death (38) and the torments of hell (42). The inevitable source of these dire threats is a

very formidable divinity. The Prologue presents God as a victorious warrior king (3), an angry paterfamilias (6), a dread lord (7) and an eschatological judge (42-44). These are not the only images of God found in the Prologue, but they are the dominant ones. The author has no intention of hiding the difficulty of conversion and faithfulness behind the caricature of a doddering, indulgent God.

Christian fidelity is already called obedience in the NT (see note 2), and the virtue has an intrinsic quality that makes it very useful for community life. Obedience means openness and receptivity to the other, rather than self-sufficient reliance on one's own vision, plans and insights (see note 3, "self-will"). Unlike asceticism and compunction, which are also necessary for the "hard labor" of return to God, obedience is not subject to self-delusion. No doubt the author was familiar with stories of the heroic exploits of misguided ascetics and hermits that dot the pages of early monastic history.

In describing the struggle of obedience, the Prologue employs two vigorous images to make the point: fighting and running. In Prol 3, the disciple is exhorted to fight for Christ with the sharp weapons of obedience. Scholars have sometimes downplayed the bellicosity of *militare* (see note 3, "fight"), but the repetition of the term in Prol 40, and the clear military language of RB 1.4-5, which *defines* cenobitism as warfare against Satan, suggest this squeamishness is misplaced.

The early monks considered their battle against sin as a continuation of the conflict of the martyrs against pagan persecution. Just as the martyrs always associated their struggle with that of Christ, so they frequently expressed warm devotion to the person of Christ. The love of Christ kept the early Church from descending into a mere struggle of wills with the Roman state. This same devotion is apparent in the early monks, e.g., the very influential *Life of Antony, (vit. Ant.)* 9. The desert tradition featured deliberate withdrawal from normal existence so as to confront the personal "demons" of addiction, obsession, license, aggressivity, etc. (Evagrius, *prak*. 6-44; Cassian, *conf*. 5.3; *vit. Ant.* 21; Holzherr, 43–44).

The second action-image employed by the Prologue is that of running, which is used very effectively to convey the need for alacrity in response to the call of God. The Bible itself sometimes describes the Christian life as a race, and Benedict makes extensive use of the idea in his Rule (see note 2, "inertia"). The Rule of the Master speaks of running three times in the psalm-commentary, and it can hardly be coincidental that these passages occur precisely at the beginning, middle and end of the treatise (Ths 9,18,44). Benedict maintains this framing in Prol 13,22 and 44 (see notes for those verses), but he adds a fourth passage of great significance in Prol 49. The three running-texts from

RM all refer to a flight from evil and damnation, but Prol 49 speaks of a joyous race toward God.

C. God's Part and Our Part

Since the Prologue is primarily an exhortation to Christian and monastic praxis rather than mere theory, it is inevitable that it must deal with the question of divine grace. If the listener puts the advice into practice, then what part does God play in the process? If the preacher succeeds in energizing the subject, is the latter engaged in a process of self-salvation?

Several passages in the Prologue have caused theologians of grace to wince. Probably the most neuralgic are Prol 4 and 41, which both suggest that divine assistance is only necessary to complete that which is lacking in human effort. No doubt both of these verses can be translated to look that way, but they probably should not be (see notes 4 and 41).

Secondly, there are other verses in the Prologue that at least imply the primacy of grace. For example, the very structure of the dialogue is based on divine call and human response, and this order preserves God's sovereignty. Prol 8–13 speaks of the need to wake from sleep, but the sleeper does not initiate this action. Rather, it is the light shining and the voice calling that provokes conversion (see notes 9 and 10). Furthermore, there are other statements in RB that show clearly that the author is aware that a human being cannot do a single thing if God does not give the wherewithal. At times, these statements are almost overwhelming in their Augustinian vehemence (see RB 4.42-43).

Another factor that must be kept in mind is the genre of the Prologue. Like any exhortatory homily, it is not particularly concerned with systematic, logical clarity. The purpose is not to sort out the intricate workings of divine grace from the human contribution, but to arouse human activity. Therefore, it is not reasonable to demand perfect coherence and balance from a work whose purpose is primarily pastoral and not theological.

Probably the strongest reason for sparing the author(s) the charge of Pelagianism is the fact that such a view is simply anachronistic. For those who live after the Reformation, with its powerful critique of self-salvation, it is hard to read these texts in their own time and place. Yet that is necessary unless we are content to indulge in eisegesis instead of legitimate exegesis. In the broad tradition of the early Church, Benedict's statement is not unusual. The Greek spiritual masters (see *verba sen.* 5.7.18) put a great deal of stress on human effort. They were not worried about Pelagianism, but about fatalism. Benedict, of course, lived in the Latin Church, where there had been a fierce controversy

over grace since the days of Augustine and Pelagius (ca. A.D. 420). Shortly before he wrote RB, a provincial council at Orange in Gaul (A.D. 529; ratified by Rome in 534) condemned Semipelagianism, a mild form of the heresy. Did Benedict know of this decree? See C. Vaggagini, 17–83.

D. The School of the Lord's Service

In Prol 45, the preacher becomes a legislator who proposes to institute a "school of the Lord's service." This phrase has become justly famous as a capsule description of what St. Benedict had in mind in writing a Rule. Since it employs familiar terms, it appears lucid enough. On closer inspection, however, the meaning is anything but clear. As a matter of fact, the word *schola* in Late Latin could have many meanings, and these meanings have given rise to much scholarly discussion:

(a) A place of service or practice. The specific place where monks live is the monastery (Prol 50), a cloister set apart from the world. RB 4.78 calls the monastery a "workshop," where spiritual crafts are exercised.

(b) A group gathered for a common purpose. RB 1.4-5 claims the cenobites are gathered for the common battle against the devil. Yet the common life in Benedict's eyes is not merely instrumental, nor is the community simply a work group. Rather, cenobitic life together *is* the purpose, just as the Church is self-authenicating (see RB 72).

(c) A time of preparation. One is in school to learn, and a monk never ceases to learn of Christ. Still, Benedict does not view monastic life as purely preparatory for the future. While the Master seems to think that everything worthwhile will begin in heaven, for Benedict life is right now and heaven has already begun (Prol 49; 7.67-70; 49).

(d) Tutelage under a master. Since cenobitic monks live under a rule and an abbot (RB 1.2), the abbot can be seen as the *magister* of the *schola*. This role is made much of by RM, which presents the abbot as a kind of guru with disciples. Benedict drops most of this master/disciple language, and his abbot is a fellow learner with the rest of the community (see Böckmann, 7.43-46).

Cassian regarded the *schola cenobitarum* as a training program for anchorites (*conf.* 3.12; 18.16; 19.2) and RM 1/RB 1 follow him in this. Yet Benedict never again mentions the idea in his entire Rule, and he clearly sees cenobitism as a lifelong pursuit.

Vogüé, 7.24-74, has suggested that Matthew 11:28-30 forms the biblical foundation of the *schola* concept in RM/RB, but this seems truer of RM than of RB. The Master quotes Matthew 11:28-30 in full in the *Thema* section, where he says that monasticism is a second baptism, the

"easy yoke." Benedict omits this entire section, so it is not clear that we should apply the passage to the *schola* as Vogüé does: "Learn of me, for I am gentle and humble of heart." Nevertheless, the idea of the monastery as the place where we sit at the feet of the humble, gentle Christ is attractive in itself.

Along these same lines, Vogüé, 13.3-12, speculates that *schola* may have an ecclesial dimension for the Master. Whereas the Church itself was often called *schola Christi* by the Church Fathers, RM 1.83 distinguishes between churches and "schools" (monasteries). The latter constitute little "super-churches" where the Gospel is lived in its pristine purity (see Cassian, *conf.* 18). If this dubious ecclesiology is operative in RM, Benedict's omission of RM 1.82-86 probably shows he wants no part of it.

Even though we have taken issue with many of the current theories concerning the "school of the Lord's service," such negative criticism at least clears the ground for a better approach. The suggestion here is that Benedict's special insertion of Prol 46–49 provides the best interpretation of v. 45. Indeed, it was probably written for just that purpose.

E. Growth in Holiness and Joy

Benedict's purpose in grafting Prol 46–49 into the Prologue of the Master can be seen by jumping from Prol 45 to Prol 50. Then it is clear that the Master's *schola* is primarily a school of suffering, where one learns how to carry the cross after Christ. This suffering is described as "patience," which refers to communal love and forbearance, but even more to the Cross (see note 50). The goal of this hard road is the kingdom, which certainly means heaven in the thought of the Master.

Compared to this framework, Benedict's insertion is certainly less rigorous. He probably also feels that the whole Prologue has been a bit too harsh in its tone, for it does rely on dire warnings to make its point. Benedict knows that fear can be a salutary motive (see note 29), but it is far from the deepest level of Christian spirituality. For that, he must call on love, and that is what distinguishes Prol 49 as perhaps the key verse of Benedict's Prologue, if not the entire Rule (see note 49).

Prol 46–49 is by no means a repudiation of the stern message conveyed by the main body of the treatise. Benedict notes that a monastic existence will always involve some blood, sweat and tears, simply because we are sinners. He does not apologize for the stern things that will have to go into the Rule and its application (see note 46), but he assures us that the ascetic element is merely a means to an end.

Prol 49 puts the point so well as to obviate all paraphrase: "But as we progress in the monastic life and in faith, our hearts will swell with

unspeakable sweetness of love, enabling us to race along the way of God's commandments." In words that are so full of hope and zeal that they must have come from experience, Benedict insists that monastic practices, difficult as they may be, will eventually result in personal transformation (see note 49).

Set against the background of the Rule of the Master, this is a remarkable claim, for the Master never promises the monk joy and happiness in this world. For him, spiritual and emotional fulfillment only comes in the next world, in heaven, which he describes in luxuriant detail at the end of RM 4 and RM 10. Benedict, however, does not limit his promises to the afterlife; for him, the monastic life should produce its results here and now.

Thus at the end of the Prologue, where he has been dutifully copying his predecessor for verse after verse, Benedict suddenly reveals his own true colors. No doubt on the strength of his own experience, he encourages us also to look for experiential results from the monastic *conversatio* (see note 49). To be precise, we should grow in true joy. Of course, this is not a question of mere superficial happiness, which has little to do with spiritual growth. Rather, it is the joy which God alone can give, and which God does give to those who are progressing on the narrow path.

For various reasons, monasticism has developed the reputation of being primarily ascetic and conservative. Monks are supposed to lead a hard life, and they have a tendency to cling to tradition. What is remarkable is that Benedict sees the monastic life as essentially joyful and dynamic. He does not pretend that this experience will come quickly or easily, but he does assure us that we will grow in joyful love and that this growth need have no end.

[Incipit textus regulae]
[Regula appellatur ab hoc quod oboedientum dirigat mores]

I: DE GENERIBUS MONACHORUM

[1]Monachorum quattuor esse genera manifestum est. [2]Primum coenobitarum, hoc est monasteriale, militans sub regula vel abbate.

[3]Deinde secundum genus est anachoritarum, id est eremitarum, horum qui non conversationis fervore novicio, sed monasterii probatione diuturna, [4]qui didicerunt contra diabolum multorum solacio iam docti pugnare, [5]et bene exstructi fraterna ex acie ad singularem pugnam eremi, securi iam sine consolatione alterius, sola manu vel brachio contra vitia carnis vel cogitationum, Deo auxiliante, pugnare sufficiunt.

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[6]Tertium vero monachorum taeterrimum genus est sarabaitarum, qui nulla regula approbati, experientia magistra, *sicut aurum fornacis,* sed in plumbi natura molliti, [7]adhuc operibus servantes saeculo fidem, mentiri Deo per tonsuram noscuntur. [8]Qui bini aut terni aut certe singuli sine pastore, non dominicis sed suis inclusi ovilibus, pro lege eis est desideriorum voluntas, [9]cum quicquid putaverint vel elegerint, hoc dicunt sanctum, et quod noluerint, hoc putant non licere.

[10]Quartum vero genus est monachorum quod nominatur gyrovagum, qui tota vita sua per diversas provincias ternis aut quaternis diebus per diversorum cellas hospitantur, [11]semper vagi et numquam stabiles, et propriis voluntatibus et gulae illecebris servientes, et per omnia deteriores sarabaitis.

[12]De quorum omnium horum miserrima conversatione melius est silere quam loqui. [13]His ergo omissis, ad coenobitarum fortissimum genus disponendum, adiuvante Domino, veniamus.

[Here begins the text of the Rule]
[It is called a rule because it regulates the life of those who obey]

RB 1: THE KINDS OF MONKS

1. It is clear that there are four kinds of monks. 2. The first are the cenobites, who live in monasteries and serve under a rule and an abbot. 3. The second kind are the anchorites, that is, hermits. Their observance is no mere novice-fervor, but the result of long testing in a monastery. 4. Community support has taught them how to battle the devil 5. and this excellent training in the fraternal battle-line enables them to venture out to the single combat of the desert. There they are able to fight with God's help against vices of flesh and thought, relying on their own hand and arm rather than relying on the help of others.

6. The third type of monk is the Sarabaites, and they are wretched. They have been tested by no rule based on the criterion of experience. Unlike gold tested in the furnace, they are as soft as lead. 7. They lie outwardly to God by their tonsure but still remain faithful to the world by their deeds. 8. They live in twos and threes, or even alone, without a shepherd and in their own sheepfolds, not those of the Lord. The craving of their appetites is the law for them. 9. Their own opinions and desires they call holy; what displeases them they say is not permissible.

10. The fourth kind of monk are called gyrovagues. They spend their whole lives wandering through various provinces, staying in the cells of different monks for three or four days at a time. 11. They are ever on the move and never stable. Slaves to their own wills and the delights

of the palate, they are in every respect worse than the Sarabaites. 12. It is better to be silent than to speak of the wretched lifestyle of these monks. 13. So, putting these aside, let us with God's help turn to arranging a way of life for that most vigorous race, the cenobites.

RB 1 Notes

This chapter is virtually a replica of RM 1, except for RB 1.11-13, but Benedict omits an enormous, and rather outlandish, satire on the gyrovagues that runs from RM 1.13 to 92.

T

The explanatory sentence "It is called . . . " is found only in some mss and probably was added by a later hand (Vogüé, 1.436). The etymology given here is based on the connection of *regula* (rule) with *dirigere* (regulate) (*RB 1980*, 168).

1.

four kinds (quattuor genera) of monks comes from the classification of Cassian, *conf.* 18.4, which is followed by RM 1. In Cassian's system, the cenobites are presented first, not because of their excellence, but because he thinks they appeared first in history as successors of the Jerusalem Church of Acts 2 and 4 (Vogüé, 8.328). Earlier still, Jerome, *ep.* 22.34, spoke of three kinds: cenobites, anchorites and sarabaites. The Master adds gyrovagues to Jerome's trio, and this fourth type also replaces Cassian's false anchorites (Lentini, 40).

monks (monachorum) is a term derived from Greek *monachos*, which normally means single or alone. In the early Greek Church, the word was applied to those who chose a celibate life for religious reasons, but it also referred to those who separated themselves from society, i.e., anchorites. The term became common in the Latin Church through the *Life of Antony* and the writings of Jerome. In both East and West it was also applied to cenobites, sometimes because of their life of unity (Augustine, *in ps.* 132.6). See *RB 1980,* 301–321. Benedict uses *monachus* more readily than the Master does, but his favorite word is *frater* (brother). See *Index:* Monk.

2.

cenobites (cenobitarum) is a Greek term: *koinos bios* (common life). Cassian has the form *coenobiotarum* (*conf.* 18.5) and explains it as "living together in a community" *(in congregatione pariter consistentes)*, which is more descriptive than the Master's *monasteriale*. See Vogüé, 3.35; 8.329. Benedict uses "cenobite" only in this chapter and in 5.12,

which is also from RM. The term cenobite was first used by the Pachomian monks of south Egypt in the mid-fourth century. The *Testament of Horsiesi* (*lib. Hors.*, 50) says that Pachomius founded a "circle of *koinonia*," and points to Hebrews 13:16 and Acts 4:32 as the foundational scriptural texts. Of all early monastic Rules, probably Augustine's *reg. serv.* 1.2-3 puts the most emphasis on common life, making Acts 4:32 the controlling theme of the entire document. Benedict quotes Acts 4:32 but once (RB 33.6: and then in garbled fashion!) but he is thoroughly communal in his thinking. See Holzherr, 57–58; see *Index:* Cenobite.

living in monasteries (monasteriale) is a more general term than *cenobia,* since it can refer to the dwellings of anchorites as well as cenobites (Cassian, *conf.* 18.9-10). Hence its use in RM 1.2 is somewhat confusing.

under a Rule and an abbot (sub regula vel abbate) is not an equal pair, as is shown by the fact that it is never reversed in 1.6-8; 3.7-9; 23.1. The Rule comes before the abbot and the latter lives under the common Rule. In the writings of Cassian, *conf.* 18.5-7, and other early monastic writers, "Rule" means the oral tradition of monastic discipline. Often this was virtually identical with the teaching and authority of the founding abbot, but with the need to transfer authority to a successor, a written Rule became necessary. In fact, the Master is a pioneer in setting the Rule over the abbot with a claim for the quasi-inspired authority of the Rule (Prol 1–27). For most of the early cenobitic legislators, though, Scripture was the basic Rule, and the monastic Rule was merely an attempt to apply the Bible to local conditions. For example, Basil's Rule is mostly based on questions concerning the monastic interpretation of biblical texts. At the time of Benedict, and for some centuries afterward, no written monastic Rule had more than local authority. Only at the time of Charlemagne was the Rule of Benedict imposed on the whole Frankish Empire (ninth century). See Vogüé, 29.209-241. A Rule is what the anchorites do not need because of spiritual maturity, and what the sarabaites and gyrovagues do need because of their lack of the same (Lentini, 42). Although *vel* usually means "or," the meaning here is clearly "and": Rule *and* abbot.

3.

anchorites (anachoritarum) translates the Greek *ana* (apart) *choreo* (live). Thus it has affinity with *monachos* as solitary (Lentini, 42). See *RB 1980,* 17–23; see *Index:* Anchorite.

hermits (eremitarum) is based on Greek *eremos* (desert). Although it refers to place rather than lifestyle, it was used as a synonym of anchorite (Lentini, 42).

observance (conversationis) represents an alteration of RM 1.3, which has *conversionis*. This change is not casual, for Benedict repeats it in 58.1 (RM 90.1). *Conversatio* as "observance" or external lifestyle was a common word for the earliest monks, and Benedict seems to be returning to Cassian, *conf.* 18.4: *in actuali conversatione perfecti.* Scribes after the time of Benedict, however, no longer understood the word and regularly changed the word to *conversio*. See Prologue note 49, "lifestyle"; Wathen, 1.1-44; Vogüé, 1.437; *RB 1980*, 459–463. See *Index:* Conversatio.

mere novice-fervor (fervore novicio) is not a criticism of the enthusiasm of beginners as such, but a realistic warning that their fire tends to cool over time. Yet it need not: see RB 72.3. Without communal support to rekindle the embers, the hermit risks going cold altogether.

long testing in a monastery (monasterii probatione diuturna) as a preliminary to eremitic life is demanded by Cassian, *inst.* 5.36,1, and Jerome, *Ep.*, 125.9 (Vogüé, RM 8.329). Such testing makes sense from the psychological point of view, but the monastery as a training school for the solitary life has other less attractive implications. It assumes that community is a means to an end, which it is not. See Prologue Overview, "school of the Lord's service," part B. Nor does Benedict anywhere else in his Rule suggest that cenobitic life is a temporary commitment. See Prol 50: "until death" *(usque ad mortem).*

Basil of Caesarea was one early writer who did not believe that anchoritic life is superior to cenobitic monasticism. In *reg.* 3, he lists the following drawbacks to solitary life: (a) We need material help. (b) Love turns toward others. (c) The criticism of others is invaluable. (d) The command to love others is best carried out in corporate works of mercy. (e) To be the body of Christ means common life. (f) All the gifts of the Spirit are not given to one person but to the community. See Holzherr, 61.

4.

support (solacio) has a more active sense than can be conveyed by a word like "solace." That suggests defeat, but Benedict is confident that the devil can be held off, if not conquered. Elsewhere in RB, *solacium* always refers to assistance given to swamped officials (31.17; 35.3,4; 53.18,20; 66.5). G. Holzherr, 60, thinks that the basis of *solacium* is the NT idea of *paraklesis* (John 14:16), which was sometimes translated "comfort" but connotes strengthening as well as sympathy. See *Index:* Support.

the devil (diabolum) is not much mentioned in RB, and where he is, the monk is conceded a good chance of resisting him if the available

means (here, communal support) are utilized. See Prologue note 28, "the wicked one, the devil." See *Index:* Devil.

5.

training (exstructi). Benedict has inexplicably changed *instructi* of RM 1.5, which has the obvious meaning of instruction. Nonetheless, the usual meaning of *exstructi*, "built up" (OLD, s.v.) is not impossible. Vogüé, 1.438, however, notes that prefixes in Late Latin often lose their proper sense. He translates *exstructi* as "well-armed."

venture out is supplied because the text has no verb for the prepositional phrase "to the single combat" *(ad singularem pugnam)*. The phrase *fraterna ex acie* is here construed as instrumental, but it could also be read as "place from." Another angle of interpretation has *ad* depend on *exstructi* (Lentini, 44).

battle-line (acie), along with *pugnam* and *pugnare* (fight) carries on the martial language of the Prologue. See Prologue notes 3 and 40.

help (consolatione), like *solacio* in the previous verse, refers to strengthening aid rather than mere sympathy.

with God's help (Deo auxiliante) is a necessary qualifier, since the verse puts so much emphasis on the spiritual power of the well-trained anchorite (Lentini, 44). Yet *Deo auxiliante* would hardly satisfy a hard-line partisan of Augustine's *sola gratia*. RM 1.5 has "with God and the Spirit." See *Index:* Grace.

flesh and thought (carnis et cogitationum) could refer to the whole person, in all its aspects, but the plural of "thoughts" suggests the discernment of *logismoi* in Evagrius and Cassian. See note on Prol 28; see *Index:* Thought.

6.

wretched (taeterrimum) is found in most mss, but seems to be less appropriate than *deterrimum* (worst), which is found in Cassian, *conf.*, 18.4 and 7; Jerome, *Ep.*, 22.34 and RM 1.6. The superlative is probably not a true one, since 1.11 declares the gyrovagues are worse *(deteriores)* than the sarabaites. Perhaps the Master's indignation against them both is so great that he cannot decide which is worse.

sarabaites (sarabaitarum) comes from Coptic *sar* (man of) *auet* (the community), a word with no negative implications. Jerome has a similar word, *remnuoth*, *ep.*, 22.34. It is not clear how either word acquired negative connotations. See *RB 1980*, 318.

the criterion of experience (experientia magistra) is a very Cassianic idea. The concept appears in various forms in *conf.* 3.7,4; 12.4,1; 12.16,3;

19.7. RM 1.6 has *experientia magistro,* which is a masculine personification. The yoking of "Rule" and "experience" shows that the sarabaites are lacking precisely what the cenobites have, namely, a "Rule and an abbot." The present translation suggests that the Rule was written out of experience; it must also be interpreted by an experienced abbot. Lentini, 45, points out that this ablative absolute, *experientia magistra*, can be read as parenthetical: "as experience teaches us." Many commentators take the words as an instrumental parallel to *regula,* which is the clear meaning in RM 1.6. Lentini himself prefers to keep *experientia* subordinate to *regula* on the grounds that the latter is precisely the "mistress" that must rule the monk. This experience will produce a mature monk.

rule (regula) could refer to a written Rule or simply a disciplined life (see note 1.2). If RM/RB are indicting all monks who had no formal, written Rule, they are in effect condemning all celibate religious before the Edict of Constantine, A.D. 313. Before that time, men and women lived alone or in small groups as publicly vowed religious who were under the bishop and revered by the whole Christian community. See Desprez passim. See *Index:* Rule. The institutional bias of RM/RB 1 does not invalidate the point that good training and guidance are very helpful for someone embarking on the monastic path.

7.

remain faithful (servantes) means to watch carefully, to take one's cues from (the world). The tonsured person claims to be devoted to God and to take cues from him alone.

lie to God (mentiri Deo) refers to the intention of the subject, not the success of the lie, which can never fool God. Since religious vows are made to God, any deception or infidelity in their realization is an offence against the Most High.

tonsure (tonsuram) is, surprisingly enough, not found in the monastic tradition anterior to RM/RB. It probably resembled the Roman custom of the time, namely, hair worn short but not shaved off. See *RB 1980,* 170; H. Leclercq, 3.2430-2443.

8.

twos or threes, or even singly (bini aut terni aut certe singuli). Cassian thinks of the sarabaites as false cenobites, so he has them living in small communities, his fourth category being false anchorites. Because he wishes to add a new category, viz., gyrovagues, the Master lumps together the false cenobites and anchorites. This results in the illogical charge against the hermits that they lack a superior. Benedict then

drops the added accusation of acquisitiveness (RM 1.10), making his verse even less coherent. See Vogüé, 8.330-331.

their own sheepfolds, not the Lord's (non dominicis sed suis inclusi ovilibus) is perhaps an allusion to the "school of the Lord's service" of Prol 45. Sheepfold here is parallel to school, but in either case the point is the will of God. For RM/RB, that will needs to be mediated to the monk, at least in the apprentice stage, by the superior (Lentini, 48).

they live has been added to complete the elliptic text. Anacolouthon is typical of the spoken Latin which is common in the Rule (Lentini, 48).

the thrust of their appetites (desideriorum voluntas) is probably an epexegetical genitive (see Prologue notes 2 and 49), since the two words mean much the same thing. The purpose of monastic discipline is to channel desire, and obedience is meant to curb self-will (see RB 4.59-61).

9.

Benedict omits RM 1.10-12, which describes the sarabaites' acquisitiveness and lack of proper training. Cassian, *conf.* 18.3,2, and Augustine, *c. Par.* 2.13,31; *c. Cres.* 4.37, speak of those who confuse their own wishes with the objective good.

desires and opinions (quicquid putaverint vel elegerint). Benedict is very critical of opinionated and strong-willed monks (see Prol 3; 1.11; 3.8; 4.60; 5.7; etc.). No doubt those traits were frequent among the private religious (see note 1.6), but would be less appreciated in organized community life. See *Index:* Desire.

holy (sanctum) is, strictly speaking, only to be said of God alone. Hence, the sarabaites are at least indirectly accused of self-idolatry. See *Index:* Holiness.

10.

gyrovagues (girovagum) is a word coined by the Master from Greek *giro* (circle) and Latin *vagari* (wander). Benedict has reduced the Master's extravagant diatribe of the gyrovagues from sixty to two verses. This satire should not be taken as an absolute condemnation of travel by monks, for RM 66–67 and RB 67 create regular rituals for departing and returning monks. RM 56–63 is an elaborate code of behavior for monks sent out on business by the community. Gyrovagues, however, were merely roaming. Yet business was not the only legitimate reason for monks to travel: the Irish did so for penitential and missionary purpose (See *RB 1980,* 114–118). Augustine, *in Ps.* 132.3, speaks of *circumcelliones*, but these were Donatist vigilantes who roamed the countryside harassing the Orthodox. See Kardong, 19.171-172.

three or four days at a time (ternis aut quaternis diebus). They leave just before they would be asked to join in the daily work. RM 78 lays down the rule that guests must begin to work on the third day, but the point is the same. Cassian, *inst.* 10.5-6, describes the spiritual vice of *acedia,* which impels a person to avoid the hard, boring work of personal conversion. For him, the cell symbolizes this hard labor, and wandering from the cell means a flight from personal spiritual work. See *Index:* Work.

cells of different monks (diversorum cellas) is an apparent reference to the cells of anchorites, whose piety obliged them to openhanded hospitality, but whose resources were often unequal to the task. Cassian tells of a hermit who returned to the cenobium to flee the burden of hospitality, *conf.* 19.2-6. On the other hand, *cellae* could refer to cenobitic monasteries as well as hermitages (Blaise, s.v.). RM 78–79 exhibits an extremely defensive attitude toward visiting monks, suspecting them of being spongers and thieves. See *Index:* Cell, Hospitality.

11.

stable (stabiles) is a basic monastic value for Benedict, so much so that he makes it one of the three promises required of the monk. See RM 88.1; 89.1; see *Index:* Stability.

slaves to their own wills and the delights of the palate (propriis voluntatibus et gulae inlecebris). The satire of RM 1.14-74 puts far more stress on the gluttony of the gyrovagues than on their lack of docility. Benedict's drastic reduction of this section gives the two ideas equal weight. The alternate reading *voluptatibus* (ms alpha) would amount to a synonym, but *propriis* suggests *voluntatibus* (Lentini, 49). *Servire propriis voluntatibus* is seen in *verb. sen.* 5.14,10, a text familiar to Benedict. See *Index:* Service, Will.

12.

these (horum). Because there is already a relative pronoun, *horum* appears to be a pleonasm. Lentini (50), however, says this is a traditional device to put special emphasis on the noun (monks).

lifestyle (conversatione). See Prologue note 49.

silent (silere). RM 1.13 says the same thing, but it is strictly a rhetorical feint, for the author immediately goes on to spend sixty verses on the subject. Benedict's remark comes after a few choice verses, so it is not a rhetorical flourish.

13.

Jerome, who had a somewhat checkered monastic career himself,

expresses outraged indignation at aberrant monks: "Therefore, now that we have exterminated these pests, let us turn to those who live in common, that is, those we have said are called the cenobium" (*ep.* 22.35). The same purpose of legislating for cenobites is also stated in RM 1.75.

arranging things (disponendum) is a quasi-legal term, for Benedict is embarking on an elaborate constitution for his community.

most vigorous (fortissimum) could be an allusion to Prol 3, which urges the cenobitic candidate to take up the "powerful and shining weapons of obedience." Obedience distinguishes the cenobite from the anchorite, who has no superior. The superlative here should probably be given its full force for several reasons: (a) Benedict has deliberately reworked RM 1.75, which calls the cenobites merely *magnum* (great). He would not have moved from the positive to the superlative degree without a reason. (b) The cenobites are singled out for special praise at the end of the taxonomy of RB 1 because the legislator means to feature them in his treatise which follows. (c) The anchorites are presented as "graduates" of cenobia in 1.3-5, but never said to be superior to the cenobites. (d) Anchorites are never mentioned again in RB. It is not impossible that *fortissimum* here means "most numerous," referring to the numerical predominance of cenobites over anchorites in the Latin West (*RB 1980*, 171). Lentini (51) thinks *fortissimum* means "best," since *fortis* can mean great or good in Late Latin (see Isidore, *Etymol.* 3.48,1).

RB 1 Overview

RB 1: The Kinds of Monks, is a curious taxonomy of the various forms of ancient monastic life. Although the Rule that follows will legislate for one kind only, namely, a group of cenobites, this list seems to be an attempt to situate cenobitism in the monastic landscape of that day. The main distinction, of course, is with anchoritism, which was very common in the earliest years of the monastic movement in the East. But some verses are also devoted to a rejection of two monastic aberrations, the sarabaites and the gyrovagues. The odd thing about the chapter is that it spends most of its time on the three classes it is setting aside, and relatively little on the cenobites.

Part of the reason for this anomaly lies in the literary background of the chapter, the ultimate roots of which go back to Cassian, *conf.* 18.4-8, and Jerome, *ep.* 22.34. Both of them present a taxonomy of monks, and this traditional exercise is repeated, with certain adjustments, by the Master (RM 1). When Benedict in turn recycles RM 1, he is playing

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on a time-honored theme which he does not seem to want to change drastically, although it does not mesh well with the rest of his Rule and monastic philosophy.

Perhaps the confusion stems from the fact that Cassian, and probably Jerome and the Master as well, have a higher opinion of anchoritism than of cenobitism. The two kinds of monks are reconciled by requiring that hermits be trained in the cenobium, but this does not eliminate the anomaly of beginning a cenobitic rule with an encomium of anchoritism. Some scholars (Vanderhoven, Manning, Masai) have contended that a later hand introduced this chapter into RM, but Vogüé, 11.1-25, shows this is not so. Indeed the Master himself has a rather low estimate of cenobites (see RM 1.83ff.).

Another problem lies in the literary genre of the chapter. Vogüé, 7.71-72; 11.3-25, thinks that the Master may be indulging in a kind of literary dalliance involving a leisurely, even playful, discourse which comes to the point only in the last few verses. This genre includes the use of unusual terms like cenobite, anchorite, sarabaite, and a wild, burlesque satire of the gyrovagues. Benedict achieves more sobriety by eliminating this satire, but he cannot escape the liabilities inherent in this treatise, which is problematic in both form and content.

Nevertheless, Benedict has to some extent transcended his sources. In his last verse, he says that he will legislate for "the most vigorous" kind of monks, the cenobites. My literal translation of this superlative contradicts most other scholars, but I think it is justified by the data (see note 1.13). As a matter of fact, most scholars have bought Cassian's argument that the solitary life is superior to the communal, which is why they cannot bring themselves to accept the obvious sense of RB 1.13.

These remarks are in no way meant to criticize anchoritism as such, for it is certainly a valid and valuable form of monasticism. The problem comes with comparisons to cenobitism, which also stands by itself as a valid monastic expression. To relegate common life to the ancillary task of forming anchorites cuts at the very heart of community. When people make cenobitic vows, they commit themselves to the other members of the community (as well as to God). To say *in principle* that this covenantal relation is merely instrumental means that one can simply use others for personal growth—and leave them behind when convenient. No doubt it is good to hold open the possibility that a cenobite be called to anchoritism (and vice versa), for the Spirit blows where she wills. That is quite different than saying that the cenobium is a school for anchorites.

Even though RB 1 says little about cenobites as such, G. Holzherr, 60–61, shrewdly notes that it actually says much more about them

indirectly in its comments about the *other* kinds of monks. The direct statement, of course, is famous: cenobites "serve under a rule and an abbot." This definition, which was invented by the Master (see note 1.2) certainly comes down on the side of law and order. Cenobitic life is presented as a life of obedience, especially to an established, written Rule, but under the guidance of a living interpreter, the abbot. No doubt Benedict accepts that as his working definition, for it is in consonance with RB Prol 1–3.

From the viewpoint of monastic history, this one sentence seems to show that the movement has passed from the period of charismatic founders to a time when the charism needs to be codified: the abbot must also function within the Rule. Moreover, throughout RB 1 it is implied that one cannot be a decent monk without a Rule and an abbot, but that denies, or at least ignores, the honorable history of all Christian ascetics and virgins before A.D. 315 (see note 1.6). Since the main charge against the sarabaites and gyrovagues is self-will and lack of order, it is easy to forget that anchorites are vulnerable to the same criticism, since they have neither a Rule nor an abbot.

What do we learn about cenobitism from the remarks about other monastic types? For one thing, it is an ongoing process that takes time and therefore puts religious enthusiasm to the test. The very etymology of the word *conversatio* shows that it is a matter of process rather than sudden change (see notes to Prol 49 and 1.3). Anchorites have experienced this long testing process (1.3) but sarabaites have not. The latter are compared to soft lead (1.7) which is not purified like gold in the furnace.

Perhaps the most striking thing RB 1 teaches about cenobitism is its mutuality. The communal life is compared to a joint battle versus Satan, with the members supporting each other in the deadly warfare against the ancient enemy. The cenobitic community is called *fraterna acies* (communal battle-line), which places emphasis on the mutual aid of comrades who take responsibility for the salvation of one another. Of course, they fight or serve (*militare:* 1.2) under an abbatial commander, who has only their spiritual welfare at heart.

The high incidence of martial terminology in RB 1 may be somewhat offputting. Besides *militare* and *acies*, *pugna* (fight) is used three times in vv. 4-5. These are obvious terms, but there are subtler ones besides. In 1.4, the help of the community is called *solacium;* in 1.5, it is called *consolatio.* Both of these words appear to denote sympathy or tenderness, but they also have undertones of strength and courage (see notes 1.4 and 1.5) contributing to the rather bold, aggressive tone of this chapter. Whatever other ambiguities it may project, RB 1 presents monastic life as a ruthless, relentless battle against the powers and principalities.

Obviously, all this military language is metaphorical. Evil does not ordinarily present us with an external foil that can be opposed by feverish activity. Rather, the enemy of the monk is within; the battlefield is the heart; the weapons are the ascetical and spiritual arts (see RB 4). This comes out in RB 1.5, where the hermit is said to be one who is strong enough to battle "vices of flesh and thoughts" alone. The term *cogitationes* (thoughts: see note 1.5) refers to deep attitudes of the heart which can only be healed and transformed *(Deo auxiliante)* by unremitting vigilance and courageous conversion. Benedict urges the community to find ways to encourage and facilitate this work (*the* monastic work) in its members.

This monastic labor is rightly described as a battle, not only because the devil is wily and sin is deeply ingrained in us, but also because our culture provides little help in the struggle. Today we live in an entertainment society based on systematic distraction, mostly concentrated in the mass media. This atmosphere encourages the kind of instability Benedict condemns in the gyrovagues (see note 1.11), except that now the heart may roam without setting foot outside the door. The vagrancy here is avoidance of the painful task of conversion, which requires a supportive *and* confrontative community.

This could well be the meaning Benedict intends for his characterization of the cenobites as *fortissimum:* they are the ones who are willing to carry on the good fight with the "powerful and shining weapons of obedience" (Prol 3). Unlike the other kinds of monks, they do not go it alone, but submit themselves to the searching but bolstering process of community life as a context for the search for truth and God.

II: QUALIS DEBEAT ESSE ABBAS

[1]Abbas qui praeesse dignus est monasterio semper meminere debet quod dicitur et nomen maioris factis implere. [2]Christi enim agere vices in monasterio creditur, quando ipsius vocatur pronomine, [3]dicente apostolo: *Accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus: abba, pater.* [4]Ideoque abbas nihil extra praeceptum Domini quod sit debet aut docere aut constituere vel iubere, [5]sed iussio eius vel doctrina fermentum divinae iustitiae in discipulorum mentibus conspargatur, [6]memor semper abbas quia doctrinae suae vel discipulorum oboedientiae, utrarumque rerum, in tremendo iudicio Dei facienda erit discussio. [7]Sciatque abbas culpae pastoris incumbere quicquid in ovibus paterfamilias utilitatis minus potuerit invenire. [8]Tantundem iterum erit ut, si inquieto vel inoboedienti gregi pastoris fuerit omnis diligentia attributa et morbidis earum actibus universa fuerit cura exhibita, [9]pastor eorum in iudicio Domini absolutus dicat cum propheta Domino: *Iustitiam tuam non abscondi in corde meo, veritatem tuam et salutare tuum*

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dixi; ipsi autem contemnentes spreverunt me, [10]et tunc demum inoboedientibus curae suae ovibus poena sit eis praevalens ipsa mors.

[11]Ergo, cum aliquis suscipit nomen abbatis, duplici debet doctrina suis praeesse discipulis, [12]id est omnia bona et sancta factis amplius quam verbis ostendat, ut capacibus discipulis mandata Domini verbis proponere, duris corde vero et simplicioribus factis suis divina praecepta monstrare. [13]Omnia vero quae discipulis docuerit esse contraria in suis factis indicet non agenda, *ne aliis praedicans ipse reprobus inveniatur,* [14]ne quando illi dicat Deus peccanti: *Quare tu enarras iustitias meas et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum? Tu vero odisti disciplinam et proiecisti sermones meos post te,* [15]et: *Qui in fratris tui oculo festucam videbas, in tuo trabem non vidisti.*

[16]Non ab eo persona in monasterio discernatur. [17]Non unus plus ametur quam alius, nisi quem in bonis actibus aut oboedientia invenerit meliorem. [18]Non convertenti ex servitio praeponatur ingenuus, nisi alia rationabilis causa exsistat. [19]Quod si ita, iustitia dictante, abbati visum fuerit, et de cuiuslibet ordine id faciet. Sin alias, propria teneant loca, [20]quia *sive servus sive liber, omnes in Christo unum sumus* et sub uno Domino aequalem servitutis militiam baiulamus, quia *non est apud Deum personarum acceptio.* [21]Solummodo in hac parte apud ipsum discernimur, si meliores ab aliis in operibus bonis et humiles inveniamur. [22]Ergo equalis sit ab eo omnibus caritas, una praebeatur in omnibus secundum merita disciplina.

[23]In doctrina sua namque abbas apostolicam debet illam semper formam servare in qua dicit: *Argue, obsecra, increpa,* [24]id est, miscens temporibus tempora, terroribus blandimenta, dirum magistri, pium patris ostendat affectum, [25]id est indisciplinatos et inquietos debet durius arguere, oboedientes autem et mites et patientes ut in melius proficiant obsecrare, neglegentes et contemnentes ut increpat et corripiat admonemus.

[26]Neque dissimulet peccata delinquentium; sed et mox ut coeperint oriri radicitus ea ut praevalet amputet, memor periculi Heli sacerdotis de Silo. [27]Et honestiores quidem atque intellegibiles animos prima vel secunda admonitione verbis corripiat, [28]improbos autem et duros ac superbos vel inoboedientes verberum vel corporis castigatio in ipso initio peccati coerceat, sciens scriptum: *Stultus verbis non corrigitur,* [29]et iterum: *Percute filium tuum virga et liberabis animam eius a morte.*

[30]Meminere debet semper abbas quod est, meminere quod dicitur, et scire quia cui plus committitur, plus ab eo exigitur.

[31]Sciatque quam difficilem et arduam rem suscipit regere animas et multorum servire moribus, et alium quidem blandimentis, alium vero increpationibus, alium suasionibus; [32]et secundum uniuscuiusque qualitatem vel intellegentiam, ita se omnibus conformet et aptet ut non

solum detrimenta gregis sibi commissi non patiatur, verum in augmentatione boni gregis gaudeat. [33]Ante omnia, ne dissimulans aut parvipendens salutem animarum sibi commissarum, ne plus gerat sollicitudinem de rebus transitoriis et terrenis atque caducis, [34]sed semper cogitet quia animas suscepit regendas, de quibus et rationem redditurus est. [35]Et ne causetur de minori forte substantia, meminerit scriptum: *Primum quaerite regnum Dei et iustitiam eius, et haec omnia adicientur vobis,* [36]et iterum: *Nihil deest timentibus eum.*

[37]Sciatque quia qui suscipit animas regendas paret se ad rationem reddendam, [38]et quantum sub cura sua fratrum se habere scierit numerum, agnoscat pro certo quia in die iudicii ipsarum omnium animarum est redditurus Domino rationem, sine dubio addita et suae animae. [39]Et ita, timens semper futuram discussionem pastoris de creditis ovibus, cum de alienis ratiociniis cavet, redditur de suis sollicitus, [40]et cum de monitionibus suis emendationem aliis sumministrat ipse efficitur a vitiis emendatus.

RB 2: THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ABBOT

1. The abbot who is worthy of ruling a monastery ought always to remember what he is called; he should live up to the name of superior by his actions. 2. He is believed to represent Christ in the monastery, for he is called by his name 3. in accord with the saying of the Apostle: "You have received the Spirit of adoption of children, in which we cry: 'Abba, Father!'" (Rom 8:15). 4. Therefore the abbot ought not to teach, arrange or command anything not in accordance with the law of the Lord. 5. Let his orders and teaching be kneaded into the minds of his disciples like the leaven of divine justice. 6. Let the abbot be constantly mindful of the fact that his teaching and the obedience of his disciples, first the one and then the other, will eventually have to be examined in the terrible judgment of God. 7. And let the abbot know that the shepherd will bear the blame if the owner of the sheep finds them less than profitable. 8. Of course, it is quite another matter if the shepherd has devoted all concern to a restless and disobedient flock, and gone to every length to correct their sick behavior. 9. Their shepherd will be absolved in the Lord's judgment, and he may say to the Lord with the Prophet: "I have not hidden your justice in my heart. I have proclaimed your truth and your salvation, but they have mockingly rejected me" (Ps 40:10; Isa 1:2). 10. And then the sheep will receive the final punishment for rejecting his care: death will overwhelm them.

11. Furthermore, when someone accepts the title of abbot, he should direct his disciples by a twofold teaching. 12. That means he should demonstrate everything that is good and holy by his deeds more than

by his words. He should teach gifted disciples the Lord's commands by words, but he will have to personally model the divine precepts for those who are recalcitrant or naive. 13. Moreover, his deeds should show his disciples that what he teaches as harmful is really not to be done, "lest he be found guilty after having preached to others" (1 Cor 9:37). 14. Then the Lord may address him some day as a sinner: "Why do you proclaim my just deeds and take my covenant on your lips? For you have hated discipline and thrown my words behind you" (Ps 50:16-17), and 15. "You noticed the speck in your brother's eye, but did not see the plank in your own" (Matt 7:3).

16. He must not play favorites in the monastery. 17. He should not love one more than another, unless he finds him more excellent in good deeds and obedience. 18. The freeborn must not be placed ahead of the slave who has joined the monastery, except for some other reason. 19. But if the abbot decides on it, and justice demands it, let him also change the rank of whomever he chooses. Otherwise, let them keep to their proper places. 20. For whether slave or free, we are all one in Christ (Gal 3:28), and under one Lord we bear the same yoke of service; "with God there is no favoritism" (Rom 2:11). 21. The only way we count more with God is if we are found superior to others in good works and still humble. 22. Therefore let the abbot have equal charity toward all, and let him maintain the same discipline in all cases, depending on their merits.

23. In his teaching, the abbot ought always stay close to the apostolic pattern: "Correct, entreat, reproach" (2 Tim 4:2). 24. That is to say, he should vary his approach according to the situation, mixing threats and enticements, now showing the sternness of a taskmaster, and now the tender affection of a father. 25. Thus he should discipline the unruly and restless rather sharply, but entreat the obedient, mild and patient to make more progress. We warn him to reproach and upbraid the indifferent and the disdainful brothers. 26. Let him not overlook the faults of transgressors: as soon as they begin to spring up he must cut them off at the root while he still can. He should remember the tragedy of Heli, the priest of Shiloh. 27. He should correct the refined and intelligent with words at the first or second warning. 28. However, as regards the wicked and hard-hearted, or the proud and disobedient, he should punish them with bodily blows at the first outbreak of sin. Recall that it is written: "The fool is not corrected by words" (Prov 18:2; 29:19). 29. Again: "Strike your son with the rod and you will free his soul from death" (Prov 23:14).

30. The abbot must always remember what he is and what is called; he should also know that more is demanded from one to whom more is entrusted (Luke 12:48). 31. Let him know what a difficult and hard thing he has undertaken: to direct souls, and to adapt to many different temperaments, some by encouragement, some by rebuke, some by

convincing argument. 32. Let him tailor his approach to meet each one's character and understanding; he will thereby suffer no loss of the sheep entrusted to him, but even enjoy the increase of a good flock. 33. Above all, he should neither neglect nor undervalue the welfare of the souls committed to him by paying more attention to fleeting, earthly, perishable matters. 34. Let him constantly remain aware of the fact that it is souls he has undertaken to direct and he will have to give an account of them. 35. He should not plead the danger of material decline, for Scripture says: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt 6:33). 36. And again: "Nothing is lacking to those who fear him" (Ps 33:10).

37. Let him know that anyone who undertakes the direction of souls should be prepared to render an account. 38. Whatever the number of brothers he has under his care, he can be sure that he will have to account for every one of them on judgment day, and certainly of his own soul as well. 39. He should live in continual fear of the judgment that awaits the shepherd concerning the sheep in his charge. And so the reckoning he must give for others makes him concerned about his own condition. 40. The warnings he gives to others for improvement serve to effect the correction of his own vices.

RB 2 Notes

1.

abbot (abbas) could mean any distinguished monk, but it was specifically used of the head of a cenobium (see Sulpicius Severus, *dial.* 1.10,11,18,19; Cassian, *inst.* 2.3,4; 4.2,8; Vogüé, 1.441). Although the NT uses the title "Father" for God alone, and Jerome complains bitterly of its appropriation by monks (*in Gal* 4.6), nevertheless the monks showed little hesitation in the matter. Thus the earliest cenobitic leader, Pachomius, is called "our holy father" (*lib. Hors.* 10). And Basil, *reg.* 4, says anyone who has begotten another through the Gospel should be called "father." See Holzherr, 70; see *Index:* Abbot.

worthy (dignus) could imply the verb "judged," that is, elected. This interpretation assumes that the chapter is addressed to the successor of the legislator (Lentini, 55).

ruling (praeesse) can be connected to *praepositus* (RB 21.7; 64.8, etc.), which has its roots in military vocabulary (Manning, 3.14). See Drury, 229–233.

superior (maioris) refers to the juridic or legal position of the head of the cenobium, while *abbas* is a more spiritual and pastoral term (Lentini, 55). There is a play on words here, since "superior" is not just

a title but a description: the abbot's way of life should surpass all the rest in quality (*RB 1980,* 172).

2.

name (pronomine). *Pronomen* normally means "pronoun," but here it denotes the title *abbas*. Blaise, s.v. *pronomen,* lists a similar usage in Irenaeus, *adv. haer.* 2.35,3.

represent (agere vices) means to make someone present, not to replace them. The vicar has all the power of his superior, but must also strive to act and speak in the same manner as the one who sent him (see Luke 16:1-8). Here the abbot makes present Christ as the object of obedience, and not the "obedient Christ" (Lentini, 55).

believed (creditur) can be taken in its conventional sense of "accept as true" (Vogüé) or as full Christian faith (most other authors). Whatever meaning we assign the term, the Benedictine institution of the abbot rests on the Christian doctrine that Christ is present in human authority, a claim that calls for faith in the one who obeys. See *Index:* Faith.

3.

Spirit (Spiritum) is capitalized to indicate the third divine person, whereas *RB 1980* and others use the lower case. The RSV uses the same lower case for *pneuma* in Romans 8:15 as a parallel to "spirit of slavery," which cannot be divine. Still, classical Christian theology teaches that our adoptive filiation occurs precisely because we have received the Holy Spirit. Thus our consciousness rests on an ontological foundation and not mere enthusiasm. See *Index:* Spirit.

adoption (adoptionis) is not the same as Christ's "natural" sonship. Likewise, the abbot is "believed" to represent Christ, which shows that Christ is still the true superior of the Christian people. Benedict uses nuanced language to speak of these delicate matters of spiritual relationship.

Abba, Father (Abba, Pater) is not said of Christ, but of the Father in Romans 8:15. Nonetheless, the paternity of Christ was a commonplace among patristic writers. Vogüé, 1.443, notes that it was especially common in the second century, but closer to the time of RM/RB he cites the following examples: Evagrius, *ep.* 61; Arnobius, *ad Greg.* 19; Philoxenus, *ad. Patr.* 99. In theological terms, all three persons of the Trinity share in the works of the Godhead ad extra. Thus all of the divine persons share in the creation of the human person in both the natural and supernatural order. Within the Trinity, however, the First Person is father to the Second, but not vice versa. In Romans 8:15, Paul reveals to us our adoptive filiation and urges us to express our awareness of this

fact by the ecstatic cry: "Abba, Father!" Moreover, Christ eminently merits the title "father," since he engendered a saved race on the cross by his expiatory death. See *Index:* Father.

In this chapter, which is closely modeled on RM 2, Benedict nevertheless makes small changes, some of which are easier to interpret than others. Thus he has omitted "to the Lord" *(Domino)* from the phrase "in which we cry." Since *Domino* is not in Romans 8:15, he may be reverting to the original text. For Benedict, *Dominus* means Christ (see Prol 16, note), so one would think the term would serve his purposes here, but biblical accuracy may outweigh expediency. See *Index:* Lord.

4.

not in accordance (extra). The point here is not that the abbot must transmit only biblical teachings, for the Bible has nothing explicit to say on many questions. Rather, the abbot should be so imbued with the biblical spirit that he can interpret contemporary matters in its light.

Therefore (Ideoque). If the abbot is to make Christ present and effective for the community, he must, like Christ, "live by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Deut 8:3; Exod 4:4b). This, of course, includes the word of Christ in the NT.

anything (quod sit) is a curious phrase, occurring separate from *nihil*. A few mss have *quod absit* (God forbid!), but this seems to be a correction (Lentini, 57).

5.

be kneaded into (conspargatur). "Sprinkled" is the literal meaning, but leaven is worked into the lump of dough so as to make it spread throughout (see Matt 13:33). Most translations tend in that direction.

divine justice (divinae justitiae) is equivalent to the law of the Lord *(praeceptum Domini)* in the previous verse. Both phrases could refer to Scripture.

orders and teaching (jussio et doctrina) indicates a balance between power and wisdom in monastic authority (Lentini, 57). The Rule of the Master (see esp. 1.82-83) puts great emphasis on the teaching role of the abbot in the monastic *schola*. Benedict deemphasizes this theme somewhat by providing for more consultation of the community (see RB 3 Overview), but he still wants the abbot to provide solid biblical and monastic teaching. RB omits the word "warning" from RM 2.5. See *Index:* Teach.

6.

mindful (memor). Mindfulness is given powerful expression in RB

7.10-13, where the monk is told that the fear of the Lord means a vivid awareness of the omniscience of God: not only is God in charge, but he is intensely interested in what goes on in creation. Sin will be punished by hell-fire. This fierce theology is used here as a countervailing force to abbatial power, for the leader will be subject to special scrutiny in the judgment. See *Index:* Memory.

first the one, then the other (utrarumque rerum) is an attempt to maintain the full force of the Latin. The point seems to be that the disciples will not be the only ones judged by God. The abbot may be the special envoy of God in the monastery, but he does not thereby become a law unto himself. Unlike some translators, I do not read the message of the next verse back into this one, namely, that the abbot will also be judged as to the obedience of his monks.

disciples (discipulorum) is a word that only occurs in the parts of RB where Benedict is copying RM. Its presence five times in RB 2 (2.5,6,11, 12,13) gives the chapter a somewhat authoritarian tone since the term connotes subordination. The implication might be that the cenobitic polity is essentially the attachment of single disciples to a master; that is incorrect, for it is a fraternity of brothers. See Keating, 258–265. In the whole of RB, *frater* occurs 102 times; *discipulus*, 13 times. See *Index:* Disciple.

7.
owner (paterfamilias). The paterfamilias in Roman society was absolute master of the household. Since the reference here is to agriculture (flock) and economics (profit), "owner" seems better. The Synoptic Gospels often speak, explicitly (Matt 24:45-51; 25:14-30) or implicitly, of a society of wealthy landowners who entrust their economic affairs to managers and hired laborers or slaves. To judge from RB 48.7, which assumes that the monks normally hire laborers to do their farming for them, the economy of sixth-century Italy may not have been too different.

8.
correct their sick behavior (morbidis earum actibus . . . fuerit cura exhibita). The metaphor is medical (see RB 28), but the context is clearly moral *(actibus). Morbidis* refers to spiritual sickness leading to condemnation at the judgment (see next verse). The cure *(cura)* for sinful behavior is correction.

Of course, it is quite another matter (Tantumdem iterum erit ut) is a difficult connective, since *tantumdem* means "likewise" and *iterum* seems

to be an adversative. The point is that the same principle holds as in v. 7: the shepherd is responsible for the flock; but if he does his best and receives no cooperation, then he will be acquitted in the judgment (2.9).

9.

justice (justitiam) in the psalm probably refers to the saving deeds the Lord has accomplished for the community or the pious individual who proclaims them in the liturgy. See Kardong, 16.43-73. In this passage, however, the reference is rather to the Lord's condemnation of evil which the abbot has faithfully announced to the monks but to no avail. See *Index:* Justice.

10.

death (mors) is the final word in this crushing sentence. Strictly speaking, the medicinal image is carried to its logical conclusion: the result of rejected treatment is death. But the death threatened at the Last Judgment is eternal damnation.

overwhelm (praevalens). Even though the abbot has not been able to discipline his rebellious flock, death itself (eternal punishment) will finally do so (Lentini, 61).

11.

Furthermore (Ergo) cannot have a strictly consequent force, since the thought does not follow from what immediately precedes but skips back to the original discussion of the title *abbas* (see OLD, s.v. *ergo*, 5a).

12.

deeds more than words (factis amplius quam verbis). The notion of the abbot as teacher of the *schola* probably originated in the catechetical tradition of Alexandria. The presence of the brilliant theologians Clement and Origen gave that school an intellectual reputation, but it was always recognized that Christian teachers had to lead exemplary lives. This was especially clear to the pragmatic monks of the desert: "He is truly wise who instructs others by his conduct and not just his words" (*V. Patr.*, 5.12,5). See Holzherr, 70–71. See *Index:* Action, Example.

He should teach (ut . . . praeponere). The grammar here is confused, with an initial *ut* followed by infinitives. One solution is to ignore the *ut* and take the infinitives as dependent on *debet* (should) in v. 11 (Lentini, 62). Actually, the connection between vv. 12a and 12b is not clear either, for 12b is not really an explanation of 12a. 12a values example more than words, while 12b thinks example is for the simple, words for the clever.

recalcitrant (duris corde). Although good example would not seem to be a very effective approach to the stubborn, there is no doubt that "hardhearted" refers to a defect of character and not just obtuseness. See *Index:* Heart.

13.

harmful (contraria) is not quite the same as "forbidden," which occurs in the second part of the sentence. Facts can be conveyed by words, but one can only teach behavior by behavior.

moreover (vero). Since the thought of v. 13 is not much different from v. 12, this meaning of *vero* seems right. Other translators (Vogüé, Lentini) see the switch from the positive (12) to the negative (13) as indicating an adversative meaning for *vero*.

guilty (reprobatus). Because the Rule invests such massive authority in the abbot, it counterbalances it with grave responsibility and the threat of severe judgment. Although the Master rarely shows the abbot as anything but impeccable, Benedict is less sanguine (see RB 64.1-6).

14.

just deeds (justitias). See notes for Prol 25 and 2.9. In Psalm 50:16-17, the contrast is between the person who loudly proclaims the Lord's deeds on his behalf, but behaves otherwise. Although God is faithful to the covenant ("just"), the sinner is not. The RSV translation of Hebrew Psalm 50:16 makes a different point: one who tramples the Law should not be teaching it. See *Index:* Justice.

15.

You noticed (Videbas). Matthew 7:3 has the present tense, but RM 2.15 has shifted to the past because it is thinking of the Last Judgment. Benedict does not return to Matthew's text as he would normally do (Vogüé, 8.354).

16.

This verse is the thesis statement for 2.16-22, the remaining verses providing explanation (Lentini, 64).

play favorites (discernatur). *Discernere,* when used alone, can be a positive idea, as it is in RB 2.21 where it means "to distinguish," that is, set apart for honor. Certainly in the desert tradition, the master was expected to "discern" the individual spiritual needs of the apprentice monk. In RB 2.16, though, the emphasis is on evenhanded fairness and love to all types of persons by the superior. This is an indispensable ingredient for communal peace among cenobites. See *Index:* Discernment.

17.

love (ametur). The active is substituted here to match the following *if* clause. *Amare (eros)* had passionate implications that early Christianity found it best to avoid. Indeed, the NT virtually invented the word *agape (caritas)* to mean disinterested love (see A. Nygren). Apparently Benedict no longer worried about this problem, for he uses *amor* freely to speak of nonpossessive love. See *Index:* Love. Clearly, the abbot's personal feelings cannot be the same for all the members, but these feelings are not to be the basis for his ordering of affairs. See *lib. Hor*. 9 and 16; *reg. iv Patr*., 5.11,12; Caesarius, *ep. ad virg*. 4.

obedience (oboedientia) is added by Benedict to the text of the Master.

18.

placed ahead (praeponatur) could refer to an actual promotion in the community rank (RB 63) or to a more general preferment. Rank is of great concern to Benedict. See *Index:* Rank.

except (nisi). This conditional clause has been added by Benedict to RM 2.18. The addition takes some of the bite out of the Master's radically egalitarian principle in RM 2.21, which has been deleted. In its place, Benedict talks about rank, not equality. RB 2.18b-19 are the first addition of Benedict to the text of RM 2.

slave (servitio). The pernicious system of slavery persisted into the sixth century. Although the monasteries admitted freed slaves into their ranks and claimed to treat them as equals, they were careful not to admit runaway slaves, whom neither Church nor state granted the right of asylum. See Pachomius, *pr.* 49.

reason (rationabilis causa) does not mean that such a decision should be made on purely human criteria. Blaise (s.v. *rationabilis,* 4) lists many patristic passages where the word refers to supernatural attitudes and judgments. See *Index:* Reason.

justice (justitia) here is not strictly abstract and objective fairness, but something more closely connected to the Christian mystery. Every other case of this word in RB is quoted from the psalms or from Matthew. No doubt the word here refers to reasons other than the abbot's personal whim, and just as with *rationabilis* in the previous verse, *justitia* also has a supernatural meaning (see Blaise, s.v. *justitia*, 5; Kardong, 16.148-154).

19.

decides on it (ita . . . visum fuerit). Does this clause refer to v. 18 or to the main part v. 19, as I have it? Lentini, 66–67, indicates the former, but

actually translates it like I do. The meaning seems clear: the abbot not only can change the rank of slave or free, but of anyone he sees fit. Since rank is not an especially important value in our society, this discussion may seem irrelevant. Yet it shows that Benedict is not legalistic. He makes sure his system is continually "fine-tuned" by a wise director of souls, namely, the abbot. The Master may not feel a need for this qualification since he has no system of community rank as in RB 63.

20.

yoke of service (servitutis militiam). Perhaps this is a genitive of inherence (epexegetical) since both words mean approximately the same thing. The verb *baiulo* (bear) seems to require that *militia* mean "obligation," which could still have military overtones since "Lord" *(Domino)* can have that flavor. See Prol 3 note on the martial language of the early chapters of RM/RB. While the image of Christian life as servitude may not be flattering to modern ears, it is an indispensable basis for equal justice in the Church: we are all subjects of Christ—and of no one else! See *Index:* Service.

no favoritism (personarum acceptio). What can look like a truism when seen alone, is, in the context of Romans 2:11, anything but that. In that letter, and throughout the NT, the issue of Jewish particularism is very much controverted. The Jewish claim to be *the* special people of God constituted a considerable barrier to Christian missionary activity among the Gentiles. Yet, even though he leads the revolt against Gentile exclusion, Paul never denies the priority of Israel, even with statements like Romans 2:11. See *Index:* Favoritism.

21.

good works (in operibus bonis). The Latin here clarifies the idea in RM 2.20 *(factis)*. The need to translate high ideals and reputation into concrete life patterns is emphasized throughout the Prologue of RB and again in this chapter on the abbot. See *Index:* Action. The combination "good works and humility" is not found in RM 2, but it is found in RM 92.2; 93.62. The abbot is to use the same criteria (see 2.17).

still humble (humiles). Humble is not a grammatical parallel to "superior in good works," so I have interpreted it as an adversative. The Pharisaic temptation is to be puffed up by good works, and thereby lose the reward (see Matt 6:1-6). See *Index:* Humility.

22.

Therefore (Ergo). Because Benedict has omitted RM 2.21, on the need for the abbot to imitate God's indiscriminate goodness to deserving

and undeserving (see Matt 5:45), this connective no longer makes much sense. In fact, the preceding verse stresses preferment according to merit, as does Benedict in his addition: "depending on their merits." See Vogüé, 1.447. Lentini, 68, however, treats this verse as the conclusion of the whole section, and so "therefore" has a different function.

in all cases (in omnibus) could be translated "all persons," but then a simple dative would be expected. Benedict's addition of "according to their merits" creates a slight slippage here. Lentini, 68, prefers "all persons," noting that *in omnes* would be classically correct, but Late Latin is less precise in case endings.

discipline (disciplina) refers to the abbot, not the community (Lentini, 68). This seems to be a call for an evenhanded approach in maintaining good order in the community. *Disciplina* can also be understood as concrete behavior or treatment, and thus serve as a complement to "charity" (Steidle, 67). Holzherr, 66, and Vogüé, 1.447, see this as a case of the abbot challenging people to go beyond their usual efforts and horizons. Another possible interpretation, of course, is punishment.

23.

A new subsection added by Benedict to RM 2 begins here. It deals with the need for flexibility in abbatial authority due to the great variety of individuals who make up a cenobitic community.

teaching (doctrina) does not mean abstract pedagogy or even spiritual conferences, but practical guidance of persons in community (Lentini, 68). See *Index:* Teach.

convince, entreat, reproach (argue, obsecra, increpa). The second and third members of 2 Timothy 4:2 have been transposed, apparently by Jerome in the Vulgate, who perhaps read the Greek in the wrong order.

24.

vary his approach according to the situation (miscens temporibus tempora). This is a hard phrase, the precise meaning of which remains obscure. Lentini, 69, thinks it is parallel to the next phrase, which is reasonable—except for the fact that *temporibus* and *tempora* are the same word! He also suggests that *temporibus* parallels *terroribus* in meaning as well as sound, but no dictionary backs him up on that. I have simply retained the idea of time and conjectured what the idiom "must" mean.

taskmaster . . . father (magistri . . . patris). See the same combination in RB Prol 1–2. *Magister* is translated "taskmaster" to give the force that *dirum* (sternness) demands.

25.

upbraid (corripiat) is added to RM 2.25, thus making it more severe. Although the "unruly and restless" of 2.25a may seem much like the "slovenly and disdainful" of 2.25c, the latter pair are *willfully* bad, whereas the former are simply uncouth and uneducated. Hence the first pair need training; the second pair must be punished. 2.25a,b,c correspond to "correct, entreat, reproach" of 2 Timothy 4:2 and RB 2.24. See *Index:* Punishment.

obedient, mild and patient (oboedientes autem et mites et patientes) are desirable characteristics in a cenobitic monk, but such temperaments may have a tendency to passivity, discouragement and despair. They too need help from the abbot in the form of encouragement (Lentini, 70).

26.

At this point Benedict omits RM 2.26-30, which calls for humility and gentleness—even motherliness!—in the abbot. RB 2.26-30 substitutes a very stiff lecture on the abbot's duty to combat evil when it rears its ugly head in the monastery. RB 64.11-15 takes a somewhat gentler approach, but does not back off from the principle.

cut them off at the root (radicitus ea . . . amputet) is a favorite image of Benedict, who uses it again in 33.1 and 55.18. The comparison is to vegetation that can be easily weeded out when small, but which becomes an unmanageable thicket if neglected.

while he still can (ut praevalet) could also be translated "as best he can" (Holzherr, 67), but the point here seems to be quick action before things get out of hand. In contrast, the abbot in RB 28 is urged to try every conceivable means to convert a wayward brother. When expulsion finally seems unavoidable, it is not called *amputatio* but *abscio* (28.6) which means the same thing. See *Index:* Amputate.

Heli (Eli) is presented in 1 Samuel 2–4 as a weak and ineffectual father. As high priest, he failed to check the corruption of his sons, who served as his assistants. God punished them by death at the hands of the Philistines, and the Ark of the Covenant was lost in the same battle. Upon hearing of this tragedy, Heli "fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy" (1 Sam 4:18 RSV).

27.

refined (honestiores) either by nature or nurture ("wellborn": Vogüé, 1.448). Although 2.20 forbids the abbot to discriminate against former slaves, lack of education will generally prevent a person from comprehending subtle correction.

with words at the first and second warning (prima vel secunda admonitione verbis): The point is not that some people may only be corrected by words. Rather, words should be used *at first* on those who can profit from them. For example, Benedict has the deans (21.5) and the priors (65.18) warned many times. Presumably they are "refined" people, but the need for multiple corrections suggests they might need more vigorous checking at times.

28.

wicked (improbus) seems a bit strong, given the nature of the monastic community as a voluntary gathering of high-minded persons. Yet the need for physical punishment shows that good intentions can fade and noble characters degenerate. *RB 1980,* 177, claims that *improbus* does not mean "wicked" in RB 23.4 or 52.3, but that it does here. The verse reminds us that Benedict is an unsentimental realist, but we should also remember that in ancient times corporal punishment did not carry with it nearly the stigma it does now. It was used for many problems, such as insanity, for lack of a better cure.

In vv. 27-28, we have three pairs of characters, as also appear in v. 25. No doubt both these sets depend on the triple admonition of v. 23: "Correct, entreat, reproach." While v. 27 seems to correspond to the middle member (entreat), v. 28 does not deal with the first and third. Even though v. 28 has two pairs, they are people of bad will and not mere undiscipline (see 2.25, note). According to RB 23.1-5 and 30.1-3, all physical chastisements should be preceded by verbal warnings. The peremptory beating advised in 2.28 may reflect the presence in the monastery of incorrigibles. It also shows that RB has no uniform penal code. See Kardong, 20.44.

blows (verberum). The Latin contains a play on words *(verbis/verberum)* not seen in the English "words/blows."

he should punish (castigatio . . . coerceat). According to the best mss, the subject is "punishment," but Lentini, 72, thinks the scribes were confused by the phrase *castigatione ipso initio* (at the first punishment).

fool (stultus) should be understood in the moral sense of the Jewish wisdom literature. Yet even this does not seem to be the right conclusion to v. 28, which deals with a more malicious type of person. Are blows needed because of lack of understanding or because of depravity? Neither Proverbs 18:2 nor 29:19 is quoted exactly here. Proverbs 18:2 defines a fool precisely as one who does not learn from advice. Proverbs 29:19, on the other hand, betrays an aristocratic disdain for servants. Perhaps it is unfair to press Benedict too hard here, for his

main point is clear enough: both words and actions are necessary in a good spiritual leader.

29.

The quote of Proverbs 23:14 is not exact, for the OT writer does not mention "son" or "death." Yet the RSV version says: "If you beat a child with a rod, he will not die. . . . You will save his life from Sheol." Thus the thought is very close. We should note also that Benedict received small children into his monastery (see RB 30 and 59), so his comments on corporal punishment of adults may be colored by that.

30.

Benedict now returns to RM 2.32, which repeats the theme from RM 2.1-10: the abbot must live up to the name he is called, namely, *abbas,* father. The rest of the chapter will concentrate on the abbot's role as spiritual director. Luke 12:48 is quoted freely, but accurately, in this verse.

31.

The third major addition of Benedict begins here. The now-familiar trio of methods (2 Tim 4:2) is repeated, but now there are two positive members instead of one. Yet we should note that *arguere* can mean either "correct" or "convince." Benedict seems to take up the latter meaning here.

This section (esp. 2.31-32) portrays the abbot as a skilled director of souls, a role that demands both a general knowledge of the spiritual life and an intuitive insight into the particular makeup of the client. Since the cenobitic abbot lives in close communion with his brothers, he occupies an especially privileged place from which to observe and guide them. The Life of Honoratus by Hilary of Arles (*vit. Hon.* 3.17–4.18), describes the Lerinian abbot in words that show that he truly lived up to the high ideal described in RB 2.31-32. See *Index:* Discernment.

directing souls (regere animas) is a reluctant translation, since it suggests dualism of body and soul. Yet the Salzburg translation *Menschen führen* (to lead persons) does not seem adequate here either, since it misses Benedict's emphasis on the spiritual dimension. "Spiritual direction" seems too much tied up with modern ideas that really do not correspond to the relation of the Benedictine abbot and monk.

has undertaken (suscipit) has a present tense form, but most translators render it in the past. Lentini, 74, thinks the whole chapter is addressed to a newly elected abbot, but even then the past tense seems preferable.

to adapt (servire). Perhaps the literal meaning of "serve" should be retained here, since it is such a prominent Christian word. Given Jesus' own example and teaching (see John 13), Christian authority is preeminently service. *Servire* can also have the meaning of putting aside one's own interests and preoccupations to heed the needs of another (OLD, s.v. *servire,* 4), which is exactly what is meant here. See *Index:* Service.

32.

Vita Abbatum Acaun. 175,29-30, claims that a good abbot will enhance both the quality and quantity of his flock (Vogüé, 1.450, note 32).

increase (augmentatione). In this final clause, Benedict shows that abbatial authority consists in more than simply protecting the community from harm. The passage breathes a serene, cheerful faith and hope that gives us insight into Benedict's character. Compare RB 64.16: "He should not be restless and troubled, not extreme and headstrong, not jealous and oversuspicious; for then he will have no peace."

33.

By strongly advising the abbot not to neglect his spiritual role for more practical administrative cares, this verse does not thereby remove these latter from abbatial responsibility. The abbot in RB has complete control and responsibility of all the affairs of the monastery. See RB 31, where the cellarer manages the temporal business of the community, but strictly within the parameters set by the abbot. The spiritual should, however, have priority in a society where people come to put their primary focus on God.

34.

This verse expresses an idea that Benedict repeats in very similar terms in RB 64.7. It is probably drawn from Augustine's *reg. serv.* 15.200-201.

Lentini, 76, notes the prominent position of *animas* (souls) in the Latin word order. This could give the sentence the added implication that the abbot's primary task is not to achieve a profitable bottom line with the finances of the monastery.

35.

plead (causetur) could also be translated "trouble oneself." When "plead" is used, the implication is that the abbot is trying to respond to the accusation that he has his priorities confused.

37.

Benedict returns to the text of RM 2.33 for the final section. The

theme, namely, the threat of a harsh final judgment for anyone who neglects the care of souls, is not new; RB 2.34 has already stated it. In fact, this is a very repetitious chapter, due to Benedict's editorial additions.

whatever . . . number (quantum). Some translators read *quantum* as an indefinite, thereby focusing attention on the definite "anyone" *(ipsarum)*.

his own soul as well (addita et suae animae). The grammar of the phrase is obscure. RM has *addita et sua*, but Benedict may think this is too vague. Perhaps he thinks *addita* modifies *ratio* of the preceding clause.

39.

Benedict has omitted RM 2.35-38, so the beginning of RB 2.39 is somewhat awkward. It is not surprising that RM 2.35-38 has been dropped, for it seems to absolve the obedient monk of any further responsibility. Personal responsibility is never understood that way by ordinary Christian ethics. Nevertheless, this concept of the Master does serve as a powerful restraining force on authority. Benedict gives the abbot almost unlimited power, but he keeps him in check by frequent references to a higher court, namely, the judgment of God. In addition, there are many other restraints on the abbot, especially the inertia of monks.

40.

effect the correction (efficitur . . . emendatus). This indirect form of expression seems to point to long-term, continual conversion.

RB 2 Overview

RB 2 greatly resembles the corresponding treatise of the Master (RM 2) on the abbot, and we assume here, along with most contemporary scholars, that Benedict has copied RM and not vice versa. Our approach will be to present a summary of RM 2 and then show how Benedict has modified his source. We will follow the analysis of Vogüé 3.65-159, English, although we will dissent from some of his conclusions. Then we will try to situate this abbatial material in the tradition of early monasticism, with further inquiries on the abbot as pastor and administrator.

A. Content of the Chapter

RM 2 is a very carefully constructed and fully developed essay, with main units set out in an ABB'A' pattern. Sections A (1–10) and A' (32–40) are virtually identical statements on the need for the abbot to

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A. Content of the Chapter

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perform his role faithfully; otherwise he faces a dreadful judgment by God. The inside pair of units (B: 11–22 and B': 23–31) are in turn each divided into two themes: (1) the abbot must teach by example as well as words; (2) the abbot must play no favorites. In addition, RM 2.41-50 treats of the advice given by the monastic chapter to the abbot. This last section is reworked into a separate chapter by Benedict (RB 3).

For his part, Benedict has introduced three major interpolations into this material, while making a corresponding number of deletions.

The first switch involves the deletion of RM 2.21, which requires the abbot to be like God, who "commands the elements to serve sinners as much as the just." In place of this radical ethic of mercy from the Sermon of the Mount (Matt 5:45), Benedict substitutes RB 2.18b-19, concerning the abbot's freedom to change the rank of any monk according to merit. In theological terms, this should probably be seen as a less profound view of the mediation of divine grace (Vogüé, 3.71).

In the second revision, RB 2.26-29 replaces RM 2.26-31. In this case, the difference is drastic, for a statement on the need for abbatial gentleness is deleted and replaced by a call for swift punishment of vices. Perhaps the reason why Benedict has removed this material is because it calls for the abbot to be humble as a child and to provide unqualified love like a mother. Although these images can be found in Scripture, they may have been too shocking for Benedict, as they would be for most of monastic history. At any rate, by this revision RB 2 becomes a sterner treatise, even advocating the spontaneous beating of troublesome monks.

The third revision of RM 2 is more successful than the first two. In 2.35-38, the Master propounds the thesis that if a monk only obeys the abbot, the latter thereby becomes fully responsible for both of them before God. In place of this, RB 2.31-36 discusses two completely different matters: (1) governing souls is difficult; (2) the abbot is not to give more attention to temporalities than he does to spiritual matters. Given the nature of RM 2.35-38, it is well that Benedict suppressed it, for Christian ethics never permits us to completely give over our consciences to another person, no matter how holy. In stressing the abbot's responsibility, the Master has gone too far, probably exaggerating for emphasis. Vogüé, 3.72, thinks Benedict may teach the same thing in RB 2.6 where the abbot will be judged "for the disciple's obedience," but that text need not be read to mean that the monk has abdicated personal responsibility. If it does, then we must ignore it.

In summary, we can say that Benedict has essentially stayed with the teaching of the Master. What changes he has made are a mixture of gain and loss. Furthermore, his remodeling of the carefully balanced RM text has resulted in a good deal of repetition in an already prolix chapter.

B. RB 2 in the Monastic Tradition

Although RB 2 never quotes any source but the Master, who in turn quotes no previous text, still the teaching in this chapter is not unique. The same teachings on the superior turn up in monastic rules from the beginning of the cenobitic movement down to the sixth century (Vogüé, 3.81-91). Because the literary forms may differ, this may not always seem to be the case, but there is a good deal of unanimity in the tradition on this subject. The reason for this is that all the early rules derive their theology of the abbot from Scripture (*RB 1980,* 345).

Yet we must not mistake this unity for uniformity. There were, in fact, two rather distinct patterns of authority in the pre-Benedictine tradition. Veilleux, 1.3-45, contends that, contrary to most traditional opinion, the earliest form of monasticism was cenobitic. All over the eastern part of the Church, the first centuries saw Christians banding together in conventicles where the gospel was taken as the pattern for the whole way of life. The primary inspiration of these first communities was the Jerusalem community of Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-35, with emphasis on loving relations and shared goods. This was especially the pattern in Syria, Upper Egypt and Cappadoccia (Veilleux, 3–14).

The place of the superior in these communities was strictly in function with the purpose of the community, namely, to build up and maintain unity. The community freely chose for itself one of its number precisely to serve as the head of the members so as to give the body direction and coordination. The leader was, of course, seen as a special channel of divine spirit and wisdom to the group and to its individual members, but the Holy Spirit was believed to work primarily through the members. According to a modern specialist on religious life, J. Tillard, 80–103, this remains the primary model for authority in all consecrated common life in the Church. See *Index:* Cenobite.

The second model is quite different, for it does not begin with the community but with the individual (*RB 1980,* 322–335). The prophet in Israel was seen as a special Spirit-bearer capable of transmitting the life-giving word of God to other members of the community. The Christian Church saw its own leaders in similar terms, but it was realized that the Holy Spirit need not work through official channels. Inspired catechists like Origen of Alexandria (+254) were usually ordained into the hierarchy, but with the advent of the fourth century, certain charismatic leaders resisted incorporation. The desert hermits of northern Egypt avoided ordination and even maintained freedom from full communal existence. Yet, because they were so spiritually attractive, disciples gathered around these anchorites, thus forming what are called "semi-eremitic" communities.

Obviously the authority in such a community would be different than in the cenobitic model. Now the primary unit is not the group, but the master and the individual disciple. This is a vertical, hierarchical model premised on the intrinsic superiority of the master, who by God's grace is possessed of special gifts to be imparted to the disciple. Since disciples were expected to come up to the level of the master, their relationship was by nature temporary. Furthermore, no amount of these master-disciple units made a true community, since there was no intrinsic horizontal bond between the disciples.

Given these two models, we would expect that Benedict would employ the first, since he, too, is writing for cenobites (RB 1.13). Yet it is quite clear that he chose the second authority pattern for the treatise on the abbot in RB 2. The history of this choice is not obscure, since the Master has taken this path before Benedict. And the primary source of the Master is Cassian, who imported the anchoritic master-disciple ideology from Egypt to the West. Cassian applied it to Western cenobitism, thus creating at best a curious hybrid and at worst an abiding confusion (Veilleux, 15–26).

In defense of Benedict, it should be noted that he has balanced up some of the excesses of this model by omitting certain problematic statements in RM. Further, he has created a more communal second portrait of the abbot in RB 64. And finally, his application of this theory rarely takes the form of the classic eremitic master-disciple pattern. See *Index:* Anchorite, Disciple, Master.

C. The Abbot as Pastor

We have seen that a major theme of RB 2 is that the abbot live up to his title. To explain that title, we are told in 2.2 that *abbas* means father, so evidently the abbot represents Christ, for "Father" is the name of Christ. This bewildering logic (see note 2.3) does not obscure the fact that Benedict derives the abbot's authority from God himself. For RM/RB, Christ is virtually synonymous with God (see Prol 3, note). This is a very weighty claim indeed, and we must try to understand it as clearly as we can. What does it mean to say that the abbot represents God in the monastery?

For the Master, there is no question what it means. RM 1.82-83 and 11.5-14 set out the theory that God has placed *doctores* (teachers or masters) over both churches and monasteries, the former being bishops and the latter, abbots. Now, besides the fact that this theory is based on a tendentious exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12:28, it also appears to equate ecclesial and monastic authority. This is a confusion that has plagued monastic history (Veilleux, 1.24-25). Vogüé, 3.104, insists that the Master

is merely trying to keep monastic life firmly inserted in the Church by such statements, but that explanation seems inadequate (see Kardong, 17.97-109). On the contrary, this dubious ecclesiology is the very basis for the Master's habit of applying biblical texts to the abbot which were originally meant for apostles and bishops, e.g., Luke 10:16 and John 6:38.

Benedict partly avoids this pitfall by silence, for he omits both RM 1.82-92 and 11.4-15. Has he done so merely to shorten his text or because he recognizes the doctrinal unreliability of these ideas? One would suspect the second, but we cannot know. At any rate, he does not hesitate to invoke Luke 10:16 and John 6:38 in his chapter on obedience (RB 5.6,15; 5.13), so he may not see the danger here. It cannot be denied that RM/RB 2 ties the authority of the abbot very closely to the will of God and to apostolic authority. They do not explicitly equate those two things, but they come very close. Yet it must also be said that there are curbs put on this same role. Since these reservations are couched in somewhat subtle form, they need to be pointed out to the casual reader.

First, we should note that the text never says simply that the abbot *is* the father of the monks (although RB 33.5 does call him the "father of the monastery"). Rather he "is called by (Christ's) name." This circumlocution, along with the curious "abba-Christ" theology that follows it (see 2.2-3, notes), probably reflects a certain diffidence in regard to the cenobitic superior. In addition, Benedict rarely calls the monks "sons" *(filii),* although the Master often does so. See *Index:* Father, Son.

This same reluctance to attribute unlimited authority to the abbot comes through in the term "shepherd" *(pastor),* which figures prominently in both RM 2 and RB 2. Shepherd, of course, is a favorite Hebrew title for God, and the NT applies it to Christ as well (John 10:11). Yet the abbot-shepherd of RB 2.7 is not the owner of the flock (see note 2.7). Rather, he will have to account for the sheep to the owner *(paterfamilias),* who is God. In RB 2.32, the idea is repeated: the flock is only committed to him; it is not his flock. Of course, this, too, is a Christ-function, for he said: "When I was with them, I protected them in your name that you gave to me, and I guarded them, and none of them was lost" (John 17:12).

Mention of *paterfamilias* recalls the attempts of some commentators on RB, especially Herwegen, to understand the abbot in terms of Roman social and political history. Besides falsifying the text of RB 2.7, this approach commits the category mistake of applying the wrong criteria to the Rule. All of the images for the abbot used by Benedict and the ancient monks are drawn from the Bible and not from contemporary politics. We can only understand them in terms of accurate biblical theology (see Vogüé, 3.97–113), which always reserves ultimate authority to God.

Our insistence on limiting abbatial authority to an intermediate role may seem to fly in the face of our earlier claim that the abbot of RM/RB 2 is based on the desert institution of the spiritual master. A passing acquaintance with the desert literature such as *Apophthegmata Patrum* and *Vitae Patrum* may give the impression that the *abba* had almost total power over his disciple. That impression is probably misleading. The desert masters were very respectful of the spiritual autonomy of their disciples. They sought no clients and when people came to apprentice themselves to them, they did not burden them with rigid systems. See *RB 1980,* 332–337.

In fact, the special gift of many of the desert *abbas* was their ability to discern the precise individual physiognomy of the heart of the disciple. They were not concerned with general prescriptions for broad human categories, but gave a sharp, darting word aimed at the situation of the individual. This need to distinguish persons and treat each one appropriately is also required of the abbot in RM 2.23-24, and it is greatly expanded by Benedict in 2.25-26—even to the point of tedium. Emphasis on this point is meant to prevent the abbot from thinking and acting only on behalf of the institution, paying too little attention to individual needs. Certainly it implies that the cenobitic abbot know each member of the community on a personal basis. This is what the "care of souls" *(animas regere)* means in RB 2.31,34,37. See *Index:* Discernment.

Another feature of the desert model that makes a good contribution to RM/RB 2 is its emphasis on good example. The ultimate ancestor of this model was the highly intellectual scholar Origen (Veilleux, 1.14), who valued personal holiness above mere verbal doctrine (see *RB 1980* on St. Paul as a spiritual father). Certainly the Desert Fathers felt the same; in fact, some of them had no verbal doctrine at all, merely demanding imitation. This same tradition leads the Master and Benedict to demand personal, lived example to match the abbot's words. This is no academic role, but an existential service of wisdom, which can only be taught by example. See *Index:* Example.

Even though the ideal of the desert *abba* has valuable implications, it also poses problems for cenobitism. It is one thing for a charismatic guru to attract disciples and quite another for an ongoing community to find worthy successors for the gifted founder. RB 64 discusses the election of the abbot, with the possible consequences of a poor choice. Suffice it to say here that unless monks and communities approach this matter in faith and Christian realism, there can be no effective cenobitic authority. Whomever they elect, they must open themselves in humility to the abbot's discernment and guidance; only then can the abbot "be what he is called." See Weakland, 1.231-238.

D. The Abbot as Administrator

We have seen that cenobitic community existence involves several important differences from solitary, eremitic monasticism, and these variations naturally affect the abbatial task. Unlike the master-disciple system, cenobitic community involves multiple members over a long period of time. In contemporary language, it is an institution. The question then arises as to the abbot's administrative responsibility. Should he limit himself to spiritual matters or should he manage temporalities as well?

The Rule of Benedict has no doubts at all about the matter, taking it so much for granted that its first word on the subject (RB 2.33-36) is to warn the abbot not to give all his energy to material planning. These verses are an addition to RM, although the Master has a nice chapter (16) which urges all the monks not to be dominated by earthly worries and cares. Both authors are well aware that physical existence is so demanding, and also fascinating to some minds, that it can easily overwhelm spiritual concerns.

In practice, of course, no one person can directly manage all aspects of the life of a large group of people. Hence the cenobitic rules, beginning with Pachomius, arrange for managerial assistants to the abbot (see RB 31 on the cellarer). Yet it is surprising to notice how Benedict, when discussing practical questions such as meals and the ringing of bells (RB 40 and 47), requires the abbot to involve himself directly. This may strike us as impractical, but we have to understand the basis of his thinking.

According to Vogüé, 3.113–125, the reason for concentrating all power in the hands of a single authority stems from the need for a physical milieu conducive to spiritual growth. Unless the spiritual leader can control the material existence of the community, such a unified goal cannot be guaranteed. In this way of thinking, the individual monk is "cared for" by the abbot and can therefore focus all his attention on the quest for God. The corresponding danger is that the monks may never learn a sense of personal responsibility for the material life of the community (see Weakland, 2.95-100).

But there is at least one other way to understand the integrated authority of the cenobitic abbot. The monastic life is not just a complex of beautiful ideas, but a practical lifestyle in which gospel values are given concrete expression. The abbot must see to it that the practicalities of the cenobitic life conform to gospel ideals. He can only do that if he considers all aspects of life to be spiritually significant. To have a fully incarnate spirituality, one must be convinced that the whole earth is holy.

As an important corollary to this section on abbatial power over temporalities, we must at least note that modern Canon Law requires

the formal consent of the monastic chapter before the abbot can spend large amounts of money on major projects. In this matter, then, the letter of the Holy Rule is abrogated by the Church itself. Vogüé, 3.134, laments this "corruption" of the monastic ideal, but monastic history shows that abbots operating without the salutary check of the chapter vote can quickly run their monasteries into financial ruin. The same thing can happen *by* chapter vote, but at least then there is a chance that someone will ask hard questions (see RB 3).

III: DE ADHIBENDIS AD CONSILIUM FRATRIBUS

[1]Quotiens aliqua praecipua agenda sunt in monasterio, convocet abbas omnem congregationem et dicat ipse unde agitur, [2]et audiens consilium fratrum tractet apud se et quod utilius iudicaverit faciat. [3]Ideo autem omnes ad consilium vocari diximus quia saepe iuniori Dominus revelat quod melius est. [4]Sic autem dent fratres consilium cum omni humilitatis subiectione, et non praesumant procaciter defendere quod eis visum fuerit, [5]et magis in abbatis pendat arbitrio, ut quod salubrius esse iudicaverit ei cuncti oboediant. [6]Sed sicut discipulos convenit oboedire magistro, ita et ipsum provide et iuste condecet cuncta disponere.

[7]In omnibus igitur omnes magistram sequantur regulam, neque ab ea temere declinetur a quoquam. [8]Nullus in monasterio proprii sequatur cordis voluntatem, [9]neque praesumat quisquam cum abbate suo proterve aut foris monasterium contendere. [10]Quod si praesumpserit, regulari disciplinae subiaceat. [11]Ipse tamen abbas cum timore Dei et observatione regulae omnia faciat, sciens se procul dubio de omnibus iudiciis suis aequissimo iudici Deo rationem redditurum.

[12]Si qua vero minora agenda sunt in monasterii utilitatibus, seniorum tantum utatur consilio, [13]sicut scriptum est: *Omnia fac cum consilio et post factum non paeniteberis.*

RB 3: ON CALLING THE BROTHERS FOR COUNSEL

1. As often as important questions have to be dealt with in the monastery, the abbot should convene the whole community and himself tell them what is involved. 2. When he has heard the advice of the brothers, let him ponder the matter and then do what he thinks best. 3. Now the reason why we said that all are to be convened is that the Lord often reveals what is best to the younger. 4. The brothers, however, should offer their advice with all deference and humility, and not presume to assert their views in a bold manner. 5. Rather, the decision

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should depend on the abbot's judgment, and let all obey what he regards as more beneficial for salvation. 6. But just as it is the place of disciples to obey the master, it is his job to arrange things with foresight and justice.

7. Thus let all follow the Rule as their mistress, and no one should be so rash as to deviate from it in the slightest. 8. Let no one in the monas-tery pursue a personal agenda, 9. nor should anyone presume to argue impudently with his abbot (or outside) the monastery. 10. If someone presumes to do so, let him undergo the discipline of the Rule. 11. But the abbot himself must do all things according to the fear of God and the observance of the Rule, knowing for certain that he will have to render an account for all his decisions to God, the most impartial of all judges.

12. Now if there are any less important decisions to be made concerning the affairs of the monastery, he shall use only the counsel of the seniors, 13. for it is written: "Do all things with counsel, and afterward you will have nothing to regret" (Prov 31:3; Sir 32:24).

RB 3 Notes

For this chapter, Benedict has detached the subject of the brothers' counsel to the abbot from RM 2, of which it forms a part (41-52). He reworks this material much more extensively than he has done with the other chapters in the first part of his Rule.

1.

important matters (aliqua praecipua). Not only are important matters to be discussed by all members of the community, but it is important that they do so if solidarity and responsibility are to be promoted. To judge from the development given this matter in RB 3, it is obvious Benedict wishes to emphasize dialogue (Holzherr, 74–75). For the Master, consultation with the community only touches material issues (RM 2.48-50). Benedict, however, does not limit the scope of matters to be discussed. While earlier cenobitic legislators such as Basil, *reg. fus.* 48 and *reg. parv.* 104, arranged for a small group of councilors, the Master is the first to convoke the whole community. Benedict is the first to mandate the consultation of both groups.

himself (ipse). Throughout the process of taking counsel, the abbot remains in charge, convening the assembly, presenting the question, listening to opinion and, finally, deciding.

2.

ponder the matter (tractet apud se). The principle is not democratic,

since the decision remains the abbot's. Nor is there any question here of majority rule, no vote having been taken. Modern canon law requires the community to consent by ballot before the abbot can transact certain matters.

3.

best (utilius), that is, for the whole group, for *utilius* suggests the public good. While *utilis* is usually a neutral word, its use in Philippians 2:4 to speak of the radical altruism of the gospel suggests it may have spiritual overtones here as well. At least it is certain that the abbot seeks the opinion of the monks so as to know the divine will for the community. In RB 3.3, *utilis* is linked to divine revelation. Psychologically, people who have some say in the governing of their social group feel more responsible for its affairs. See *Index:* Useful.

has heard (audiens) indicates true listening. The implication is that the abbot is not the sole repository of wisdom and charisma in the community. This chapter shows more influence from the realities of cenobitic life than do the other early chapters of the Rule. See *Index:* Listen.

the Lord . . . reveals (Dominus . . . revelat). Benedict has added the supernatural element to the discussion, while it is absent from RM 2.41-52. As in RB 61.4, where a visiting monk is the vehicle of the Lord's revelation, here an unlikely member of the community may be the Lord's chosen spokesman. The point is that God can communicate with us as God pleases and not according to our preferences and prejudices.

the reason why we said (ideo autem . . . diximus). Benedict wants to make sure that his demand for total consultation (*omnes:* v. 1) is taken literally, so he repeats it and spells out its consequences: the least expected member is to be heard. A similar point is made in RB 63.6, where Samuel and Daniel (1 Sam 3; Dan 13:44-62) are said to have judged their elders as youngsters. This biblical argument is used to promote the principle that monastic seniority is not determined by chronological age. Here in RB 3, lack of years must not be used as a pretext for ignoring a monk's wisdom. Another biblical source may be Matthew 11:25: "You have hidden (the mysteries of the kingdom) from the wise and learned, and revealed them to the childlike" (RNAB). See Steidle, 2.345.

4.

all deference and humility (cum omni humilitatis subjectione). The two terms are virtually equivalent, so Benedict uses a favorite construction, the genitive of inherence or epexegetical genitive. A very similar expression is seen in RB 6.7: *cum omni humilitate et subjectione reverentiae.*

bold manner (procaciter). Such an approach would violate the proper order, for the monk is asked for an opinion, not a lecture. He should not presume to bully the abbot or the community, nor is his job to prevail at all costs. RB 68.3 expands on what is here forbidden: *non superbiendo aut resistendo aut contradicendo.* See Kardong, 13.195-196.

advice (consilium). The brothers should respond humbly because (a) good counsel is a gift of God; (b) they know their own limits. Holzherr, 75–76.

presume (presume) appears here the first of many times in RB. It is used to describe the behavior of a monk who sets himself on the same level as the abbot, thus violating the hierarchical order established by the Rule (see RB 2.2). See *Index:* Presume.

5.

beneficial for salvation (salubrius). *Saluber* is closely connected to the Christian word "salvation," which reminds us that the abbot's decisions must always be made with the supernatural dimension as the primary criterion. Blaise, s.v. *saluber,* cites Augustine, *civ. Dei* 2.28 as a clear example of this special Christian vocabulary.

judgment (arbitrio) implies careful, responsible decision making, usually by a superior (RB 3.5; 39.6; 40.5; 65.11). When the term is used by itself, it can mean precisely the opposite, namely, willful, capricious insistence on one's own opinions (RB 5.12).

6.

the place . . . his job (condecet . . . convenit). The same impersonal verbs occur in RB 6.6, where a parallel principle is enunciated: masters speak and disciples listen. Probably the two different verbs are chosen for variety and not to impose precise legal obligations. Both RB 3.6 and 6.6 appear to stem from the master-disciple tradition that was strong in the Egyptian desert. In 3.6, it is a question of obedience to a decision, but 6.6 precludes participation in decision making.

This part of RB 3 has a dialectical quality, with vv. 4,5 and 6 all opening with adversatives. Verses 4-5 are addressed to the community, while v. 6 is a warning to the abbot that the obedience he receives should not make him less careful to dispose things wisely. Such warnings are much more characteristic of Benedict than of the Master, who often treats the abbot as omniscient and omnipotent. See note 6.5.

7.

Lentini, 83–84, notes the solemn, rolling rhythm of this verse: *omnibus:omnes; magistram:regulam,* calling it something worthy of the Roman

senate. Indeed, it establishes the rule of law over against despotism. It is interesting to note that whereas the Master never explicitly places the abbot under the Rule, the latter is in fact a rigid straightjacket that cannot be adjusted. Benedict, on the other hand, seems to give the abbot a good deal of discretionary power over his "mistress" the Rule (see RB 18.22; 39.6; 40.5; 41.4, etc.).

let all follow the Rule (omnes . . . sequantur regulam) seems to be substituted for "let the members follow the head" *(membra caput sequantur)* of RM 2.47. Although *igitur* (thus) is consecutive, the idea is adversative, for in 3.1-6 the abbot seems supreme. In fact, the abbot and the Rule were presented as the twin pillars of cenobitic authority in RB 2.2, and now it is made clear that the abbot is also under the Rule. See *Index:* Rule.

so rash . . . in the slightest (temere . . . in quoquam) are very strong expressions and may suggest a kind of fundamentalism of the Rule. Yet Benedict is promising harmony and not advocating fanaticism.

8.

Lentini, 84, sees this verse as a statement of purely cenobitic spirituality. As in RB 5.7 and 12, where obedience is the topic, the reference may be to the need for the monks to defer to the wishes of the superior and not to cling stubbornly to a personal agenda. This is especially likely if vv. 8-9 are seen as a dialectical swing back from vv. 6-7, which are probably addressed to the abbot. Yet v. 8 need not be restricted to obedience to the superior but can be a call for the gentleness and docility that makes a life of true mutuality possible (see RB 72.7).

pursue a personal agenda (proprii sequatur cordis voluntatem), literally, the will of his own heart, which seems to refer more to a strong-willed drive for personal goals rather than the impulsive pursuit of fleeting whims. See *Index:* Heart.

9.

(or outside) (aut foris) is a strange and awkward idea in this verse. Perhaps a marginal gloss, meant to go with *in monasteriis* of the preceding verse, has been mistakenly inserted into this verse (Vogüé, 1.454). Lentini, 84–85, thinks the word "inside" has disappeared from before "outside" *(intus* becoming *aut).* This would proscribe sharp contention with the superior as out of place anywhere, but imply that respectful discussion is permitted within the enclosure. Vogüé's explanation seems more convincing. At any rate, the phrase makes no sense as it stands, and so some explanation is needed.

10.

the discipline of the Rule (regulari disciplinae) appears for the first time and will do so many more times in RB. It gives the impression that Benedict has a precise system of punishments for various offenses. Indeed, RB 23–30 appears to be a structured penal code. An analysis for the whole range of punishments in the Rule, however, shows that there is no such system. Therefore, *regulari disciplinae* is not a precise legal term. See Veronesi, 39–81.

11.

One last time the spotlight swings away from the brothers back to the abbot. The threat of divine judgment was a frequent theme in the previous chapter (RB 2.6,14,38). RB 55.22 and 65.22 end with similar warnings to the abbot, making Vogüé, 1.455, wonder whether RB 3 originally ended at v. 10. See Overview for detailed discussion of the literary development of RB 3.

fear of God and the observance of the Rule (cum timore Dei et observatione regulae) are the two principal restraints on authority proposed by Benedict. Of the two, the fear of the Lord is, of course, more cogent and an integral part of all religious behavior. The explicit call for the abbot to observe the Rule confirms the probability that v. 7 is also addressed primarily to the abbot. On the fear of the Lord, see Kardong 12.25-50; see *Index:* Fear.

most impartial (aequissimo). The usual translation is "just," but *aequus* seems to put the emphasis on absolute evenhandedness. Thus, the abbot will have to face God without the advantage of his office. Whatever preferment he experiences as superior will not affect God's assessment of his performance.

12.

affairs (utilitatibus) can refer to material goods, as it does in RM (Vogüé, 8.360-361), or to the common good of the whole community (OLD, s.v. *utilis*). Although RM 2.48-50 restricts the advice of the brothers to material matters, Benedict does not do so. RB 46.5 speaks of "spiritual seniors," which shows that the elders share with the abbot the pastoral care of the community. The Master has no comparable concept. See *Index:* Useful.

counsel of the seniors (seniorum . . . consilio) does not refer to a formal body of advisors (which would be a *concilium*) but rather all the monastic elders. This provision is added to the Rule of the Master by Benedict, but it is already seen in Basil's *reg. fus.* 48 and *reg. parv.* 104; see also Dorotheus of Gaza, *doc. div.* 11. In modern monasticism, the

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less important decisions (qua . . . minora agenda) may indicate that Benedict's community is too large to convene for minor questions. At any rate, it is useful to have an "executive committee" that can be quickly gathered when small, but urgent, matters demand a quick decision. Holzherr, 76–77.

RB 3 Overview

After his long, repetitive chapter on the abbot, Benedict presents a much shorter treatise on one aspect of the abbatial role, namely, taking counsel with the community. In creating a separate chapter on this topic, Benedict differs from the Master, whose discussion exists at the end of the abbatial treatise (RM 2.41-52). At first glance, it appears Benedict has significantly modified the Master's material. Vogüé, 3.170, however, thinks the change is not substantive since in both cases the abbot has the last word. The opposite view is taken by Borias, 4.29-39, who sees this chapter as a later reworking of the question by the mature Benedict. This Overview will follow Borias on the question.

A. A Surprising Chapter

To someone reading the Holy Rule consecutively in tandem with the Rule of the Master, RB 3 marks a change. Especially at v. 3, the vocabulary begins to include a goodly number of words seen only here in RB (for a list, see Manning, 22). Moreover, Borias shows that many words and phrases in RB 3 only recur in the last chapters of RB. Thus the keyword *consilium* (counsel) shows up six times in RB 3, and then again only in RB 63,64,65. RB 65.14-15 is loaded with diction that also appears in RB 3. Clearly, in this chapter Benedict is no longer slavishly copying the Master.

Another discovery of Borias, 2.25-38, reinforces the impression that Benedict is here functioning basically on his own inspiration. The chapter is structured in the chiastic form that Benedict uses for some of his most original chapters. If this is a true chiasm, then the center point is v. 7: the abbot himself is strictly under the Rule. And vv. 12-13, which mirror vv. 1-2, are an integral part of the structure, not a later addition.

Regarding the content, it is true that both the Master and Benedict present a hierarchical picture in which the abbot takes all the initiative: convoking the council, asking the question and making the final

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Regarding the content, it is true that both the Master and Benedict present a hierarchical picture in which the abbot takes all the initiative: convoking the council, asking the question and making the final

decision. Yet within those parameters, Benedict creates a more collegial mode of operation.

For one thing, the question is more prominently showcased in Benedict's separate chapter than in the (somewhat awkward) appendix to RM 2. Actually, the matter is very minor for the Master, since it is only about material issues that the abbot must consult the brothers (RM 2.48-50). Furthermore, the Master seems to prescribe this only reluctantly, which is not surprising considering his very low estimate of the wisdom of the average cenobite ("children of folly": RM 1.87; see B. Steidle, 2.339-352). In RM 2.44-46, the Master gives a rather banal reason why the abbot must seek counsel: there is always a great diversity of opinion about things: therefore, listen to all and choose the best idea.

For his part, Benedict takes the whole question more seriously. He does not content himself with the reasons of the Master for consultation, but ends with a biblical passage: "Do all things with counsel and afterward you will have nothing to regret" (Sir 32:24). Moreover, the gift of discretion is clearly required of the abbot, as we shall see later. Most important, Benedict does not limit the discussion to material matters, but allows the brothers to offer advice on all matters of importance to the life of the community (see notes on *utilius,* 3.2, and *utilitatis,* 3.12). Despite Vogüé's feeling that this chapter is mainly "practical," Borias, 4.39, accords it much more importance in Benedict's spiritual teaching.

At any rate, it is a very careful sketch of the kind of dialogue that must characterize a healthy cenobitic existence. Although the chapter starts out addressing the abbot, it alternately advises the brothers and the superior on their respective roles in the process. The monk should speak his mind clearly and honestly, but not so as to prevail. Rather, one gives an opinion and then leaves it to abbatial discretion whether to take or leave the advice. Of course, the abbot must really listen; it is not his task to win approval for his own ideas but to judge among all the opinions in the community—including his own. But this leaves the question as to how the abbot is to sort out the various ideas, which are often conflicting. What is to prevent the abbot from acting arbitrarily? For one thing, he too is under the Rule (RB 3.7,10,11), which acts as a criterion for his judgment. Yet, it must be admitted that many matters an abbot must judge are not covered explicitly by Rule or Scripture. The great need is for the gift of discretion. See *Index:* Discretion.

B. A Theory of Composition

What caused Benedict to develop his considerably deeper, improved version of RM 2.41-52? Borias, 4.35-39, thinks that experience, perhaps

hard experience, convinced him to rethink the whole matter. RB 65 may provide the key to the history of this chapter. There, the author discusses the choosing of a prior, and does so, it must be admitted, with very great reluctance and even bad grace. After fulminating against the very idea of a prior, he grudgingly allows the monks to petition for one (65.14-15). Yet it looks as if they have virtually cornered the abbot and forced him to act. In RB 3, however, the initiative is entirely up to the abbot, and all coercion is prohibited. What is substituted is dialogue and mutual respect.

It could also be that Benedict interposes the counsel of the seniors (3.12-13) as a counterweight to the prior that had once been imposed on him. In 65.15, he says the abbot should consult God-fearing brothers before choosing a prior, which already shows that he wishes to keep that office from becoming an autonomous fiefdom. RB 21, on the deans, shows that Benedict also preferred them to a prior, but the Senior Council may have been his ultimate bulwark. See Borias, 18.225f.

This theory of revision by Benedict is not at all implausible. After all, he also created a second chapter on the Abbot (RB 64), which softens some of the harshness of RB 2. To place the abbot under the Rule in RB 3 could well be another way of scaling down the portrait of the abbot in RB 2. In addition, many of the themes of RB Prol–RB 7 are reprised in the last chapters and read through the lens of greater mercy and love. In this case, the process is reversed, by reworking an earlier chapter that is left in its place.

C. RB 3 in the Tradition

As we have mentioned elsewhere in this study, the practice of seeking counsel from the brothers was not new with the Master or Benedict. In fact, it is completely natural to cenobitism or any truly communal life. Thus the cenobitic founders Basil and Pachomius, as well as the semi-eremitical monks of Sketis, gathered the elders for counsel (Steidle, 2.352-353). Though there is no direct literary dependency, RB 3.12-13 must depend on this tradition of the Senior Council.

For the gathering of the whole monastic congregation for counsel, however, the Master is definitely the pioneer. After him, two Gallic rules (Aurelian, *reg. mon.* 43; Feriolus, *reg.* 36) and a Spanish rule (Isidore, *reg. mon.* 18) also stipulate that the community must agree to any sale of communal property. It is likely that the legislation of the Emperor Justinian forced the monks to do this, since these three make the process mandatory. But the Master does not: although RM 2.48-50 suggests the monks own the goods of the monastery, RM 16.58 and RM 89 indicate the abbot himself is the real owner. See Vogüé, 3.191-197.

Benedict, however, avoids the issue of mandatory counsel altogether, since he does not restrict the discussion in RB 3 to the goods of the monastery. For him, as for the Master, all consultation by the abbot is purely voluntary and therefore the advice is not binding. Since Church law has subsequently come to require monastic communities to decide certain issues by secret ballot and majority vote, can we say that the spirit of Benedict has been violated? For one thing, these votes are only required in a limited number of cases; what is more, they only have veto power since they cannot force the abbot to act. But secret ballots also allow individuals to express their true opinion without fear of coercion. Freedom of conscience is thus preserved and the wisdom of the group is expressed. See A. Polag; see *Index:* Canon Law.

D. The Virtue of Discretion

We have seen that Benedict has added the biblical dictum of Sirach 32:24 to the rather secular discussion of RM 2.41-52. Yet, it must be admitted that the saying of Sirach has little that is intrinsically theological about it. If this is the extent of Benedict's spiritual understanding of the process of consultation, then we cannot say that he has advanced much beyond the Master. In fact, it seems the real theological foundations of RB 3 are to be located in the New Testament and not the Old.

Although the word *discretio* does not appear in RB 3, it is clear that this Christian virtue lies at the heart of the consultation of the monks by the abbot. In 1 Corinthians 12:10, Paul speaks of discretion *(diakrisis),* the ability to distinguish between good and bad spirits. For him, it is one of the great gifts of the Holy Spirit, given to some for the good of the whole Church. For John Cassian (*conf.* 2), however, discretion is the most precious gift or charism of all, for where it is lacking there can be no coordination of the other spiritual gifts. Then the demons can disguise their evil tricks and even the good spirits can get out of balance to the ruin of individual and community. See Steidle, 2.344-345; Luislampe; see *Index:* Discretion. Cassian mostly understands discretion as spiritual direction, with the master helping the disciple to sort out the various "thoughts" (feelings, impulses, opinions, attitudes, temptations) that surface in the heart and are presented for examination. See *Index:* Thoughts. In RB 3, Benedict applies the same idea to communal consultation, the difference being that the abbot must discern between openly expressed opinions of different persons rather than the interior thoughts of an individual. That this is the operation of the classic virtue of discretion is clear from the fact that RB 64.18-19 insists that the abbot be distinguished by this charism, which he calls "the mother of virtues" (allusion to Cassian, *conf.* 2.44; *inst.* 2.12.2).

This connection to RB 64 shows that we should not try to interpret RB 3 without reference to the second abbatial directory (Steidle, 2.344).

In closing, it may be useful to point out that discretion is essentially a "passive" virtue, which does not consist of expressing original or even divinely inspired insights, but in judging the insights of others. Although Benedict stresses the abbot's initiative in calling for counsel and making the final decision, his role is still not totally predominant. Put in everyday language, the abbot is not the only one who should be expected to come up with good ideas. Much better that he encourage and solicit the insights of others, knowing that the Holy Spirit works through all the members and not just through the head.

IV: QUAE SUNT INSTRUMENTA BONORUM OPERUM

[1]In primis *Dominum Deum diligere ex toto corde, tota anima, tota virtute;* [2]deinde *proximum tamquam seipsum.* [3]Deinde *non occidere,* [4]*non adulterare,* [5]*non facere furtum,* [6]*non concupiscere,* [7]*non falsum testimonium dicere,* [8]*honorare omnes* homines, [9]et *quod sibi quis fieri non vult, alio ne faciat.*

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[41]Spem suam Deo committere. [42]Bonum aliquid in se cum viderit, Deo applicet, non sibi; [43]malum vero semper a se factum sciat et sibi reputet.

[44]Diem iudicii timere, [45]gehennam expavescere, [46]vitam aeternam omni concupiscentia spiritali desiderare, [47]mortem cotidie ante oculos suspectam habere. [48]Actus vitae suae omni hora custodire, [49]in omni loco Deum se respicere pro certo scire. [50]Cogitationes malas cordi suo advenientes mox ad Christum allidere et seniori spiritali patefacere, [51]os suum a malo vel pravo eloquio custodire, [52]multum loqui non amare, [53]verba vana aut risui apta non loqui, [54]risum multum aut excussum non amare.

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[55]Lectiones sanctas libenter audire, [56]orationi frequenter incumbere, [57]mala sua praeterita cum lacrimis vel gemitu cotidie in oratione Deo confiteri, [58]de ipsis malis de cetero emendare.

[59]*Desideria carnis non efficere,* [60]voluntatem propriam odire, [61]praeceptis abbatis in omnibus oboedire, etiam si ipse aliter—quod absit—agat, memores illud dominicum praeceptum: *Quae dicunt facite, quae autem faciunt facere nolite.*

[62]Non velle dici sanctum antequam sit, sed prius esse quod verius dicatur. [63]Praecepta Dei factis cotidie adimplere, [64]castitatem amare, [65]nullum odire, [66]zelum non habere, [67]invidiam non exercere, [68]contentionem non amare, [69]elationem fugere. [70]Et seniores venerare, [71]iuniores diligere. [72]In Christi amore pro inimicis orare; [73]cum discordante ante solis occasum in pacem redire.

[74]Et de Dei misericordia numquam desperare.

[75]Ecce haec sunt instrumenta artis spiritalis. [76]Quae cum fuerint a nobis die noctuque incessabiliter adimpleta et in die iudicii reconsignata, illa merces nobis a Domino recompensabitur quam ipse promisit. [77]*Quod oculus non vidit nec auris audivit, quae praeparavit Deus his qui diligunt illum.*

[78]Officina vero ubi haec omnia diligenter operemur claustra sunt monasterii et stabilitas in congregatione.

RB 4: WHAT ARE THE TOOLS OF GOOD WORKS?

1. First, to love the Lord God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength, 2. then, your neighbor as yourself, 3. then, not to kill, 4. not to commit adultery, 5. not to steal, 6. not to covet, 7. not to give false witness, 8. to honor all persons 9. and not to do to another what you do not want done to yourself.

10. Deny yourself in order to follow Christ. 11. Chastise the body. 12. Do not cling to pleasures. 13. Love fasting. 14. Assist the poor. 15. Clothe the naked. 16. Visit the sick. 17. Bury the dead. 18. Come to the aid of those in trouble. 19. Console the sorrowful.

20. You should become a stranger to the world's ways. 21. Prefer nothing to the love of Christ. 22. Do not act under the impulse of anger. 23. Do not wait for vengeance. 24. Do not plot deceit. 25. Do not give a false peace. 26. Do not abandon charity. 27. Do not swear oaths for fear of swearing falsely. 28. Speak the truth both in your heart and with your mouth.

29. Do not return evil for evil. 30. Do not wrong others, but suffer patiently the wrongs done to you. 31. Love your enemies. 32. Do not curse those who curse you, but bless them instead. 33. Bear persecution on behalf of justice.

34. Do not be proud, 35. nor a great wine-drinker. 36. Do not be a glutton, 37. nor indulge in excessive sleep. 38. Do not be a loafer, 39. nor a grumbler, 40. nor one who runs down the reputation of others.

41. Put your hope in God. 42. When you see something good in yourself, credit it to God, not to yourself. 43. As for evil, know that you are always the agent of it, and therefore take responsibility.

44. Fear Judgment Day. 45. Have a healthy fear of hell. 46. Long for eternal life with the desire of the Spirit. 47. Keep your eye on death every day. 48. Maintain a strict control over your actions at every moment. 49. Know for sure that God sees you wherever you are. 50. When bad thoughts arrive in your heart, smash them against Christ and manifest them to a spiritual elder. 51. Close your mouth on evil and perverse talk. 52. Do not get in the habit of long-winded conversations. 53. Do not engage in empty babbling or joking. 54. Don't indulge in prolonged or explosive laughter.

55. Listen intently to holy readings. 56. Give yourself frequently to prayer. 57. Confess your past sins to God with tears and groaning at daily prayer. 58. Correct these sins for the future.

59. Do not carry out the urgings of the flesh. 60. Hate your own will. 61. Obey the abbot's orders in all things, even if he—God forbid—acts otherwise. Remember the Lord's command: Do what they say, not what they do.

62. Do not wish to be called holy before you really are; first be holy, and then the term will be truer in your case. 63. You must put the commands of God into action every day. 64. Love chastity. 65. Hate no one. 66. Do not be jealous. 67. Do not act out of envy. 68. Do not be habitually quarrelsome. 69. Flee pride. 70. Respect the seniors. 71. Love the juniors. 72. Pray for your enemies for the love of Christ. 73. If you have a quarrel with someone, make peace before sundown. 74. And never despair of God's mercy.

75. These, then, are the tools of the spiritual craft. 76. If we have wielded them ceaselessly day and night, and returned them on Judgment Day, we will receive that reward from the Lord which he promised: 77. What eye has not seen nor ear heard, God has prepared for those who love him. 78. The workshop where we should work hard at all these things is the monastic enclosure and stability in the community.

RB 4 Notes

T

tools (instrumenta) replaces *ars* in RM 3T. This chapter is heavily based on the Master's chapter, except that Benedict has dropped RM 3.84-95, a long description of heaven. Benedict's image of spiritual

"tools" will be developed to a fuller extent at the end of the chapter. *Instrumenta* should not be understood as merely "instrumental" or as means to an end. Since the first two "tools" consist of love, and the rest are commentary on it, there can be no question here of mere moral strategy. For the Bible, love is the very nature of the kingdom of God; what is more, it is primarily the gift of God and not a product of human effort. See Borias, 11.16-25. See *Index:* Tools.

1.

RM 3.1 begins with an elaborate Trinitarian confession, which is missing in RB 4, probably because it was added to RM after Benedict copied it (Vogüé, 456). Benedict completes the Master's quotation of Mark 12:30 with *tota virtute*. Since this and the next verses are Jesus' answer to the question "What is the greatest commandment?" they are appropriate as the beginning of this long list of Christian and monastic precepts. Such lists were common from the earliest times of the Church. Thus *Didache* 1–6, written before A.D. 150, contains similar material. Obviously it was meant for a general Christian audience, so its use by monastic authors shows that they wish to bind their movement to the great Church. We are Christians first, and monks only "in addition," which Benedict will indicate by slight modification of his sources. A more monastic source for this chapter seems to be *pass. Julian. et Bas.* 46 (see Vogüé, 4.131-180). The *Rule of Basil* and *Ordo Monasterii* (Africa, ca. A.D. 400) also both begin with the love commandment (Lentini, 90). Basil, *reg.* 2, writes a passionate encomium of the divine love as the basis and foundation of all Christian life, whereas Benedict begins with our need to love God. In this way, Basil is really more fundamental in his approach.

2.

Mark 12:31 adds love for neighbor to the love for God required by Deuteronomy 6:4, but it is not accurate to claim the Jewish Bible does not teach mutual love. In fact Mark 12:31 quotes Leviticus 19:18, and many similar passages can be brought forward to show that love is central to Jewish religion.

3.

Following the Master, Benedict now adds five precepts of the Decalogue (RB 4.3-7), the double love precept having supplied for the first few commandments. The Golden Rule (4.9) fills up the list, with several commandments eliminated no doubt as inapplicable to monks. While the Decalogue is originally a Jewish creation which appears in many biblical passages, RM/RB quote it from Matthew 19:18-19.

6.

covet (concupiscere) is taken in a sexual sense by Lentini, 91, but it need not be so specific. Since this one word appears to combine two commandments against coveting the wife *and* goods of the neighbor, it seems best to leave it unspecified here. See *Index:* Desire.

8.

Instead of "honor your father and mother," which the Master retains in 3.8, Benedict substitutes a more general precept. Vogüé, 17.129-138, thinks this is a logical move for a monastic Rule, but RB is generally unsympathetic to family ties. See Borias, 13.194-217; Kardong, 18.9-13. In addition, Vogüé thinks this aphorism summarizes Benedict's concern that monks not discriminate against the poor pilgrims who come to them for aid (see RB 53.15). See *Index:* Family, Honor.

10.

deny oneself (abnegare semetipsum) introduces three ascetical verses (4.11-13) but the source in Matthew 16:24 does not refer primarily to asceticism. In that passage, Jesus instructs his disciples of the necessity of his own confrontation with the powers of evil; anyone who wishes to be his disciple must pursue the same course, which will never be convenient and may be extremely costly. Just as Jesus met his death through selfless service of others, so Christian abnegation must be rooted in charity. Bodily asceticism ought to be practiced as a training in unselfishness. Casey, 6.37-46, points out that asceticism and practical charity alternate throughout this section of RB 4. At this point in our translation, we adopt the imperative mood in place of infinitives in order to facilitate public reading.

11.

chastise (castigare) does not seem to refer to self-flagellation, a thing unknown among the early monks. The term itself does not connote blows, and where Benedict advises them (2.28; 30.3), he says so explicitly. Vogüé, 1.457, notes that this formula *(corpus castigare)* of 1 Corinthians 9:27 is taken by Cassian to mean fasting (*conf*. 1.10; 21.15). RB 4.12-13 also speak of fasting, so there may be a connection. Benedict has dropped the words *pro anima* (on behalf of your soul) of RM 3.11, perhaps to preclude a dualist interpretation.

12.

pleasures (delicias) does not have to be restricted to the palate, but Vogüé thinks it is, since the next verse refers to fasting. In RM 53.24 and 90.21, the word does refer to food, and RM 3.12 has *fugire* (flee), which he elsewhere connects with gluttony (RM 26.13; 27.46). Benedict

replaces "flee" with "Do not cling," which avoids the charge of dualism. Vogüé and Lentini have "Do not pursue." *RB 1980* has the delightful "Do not pamper yourself."

13.

to love (amare) appears a surprising five times in RB 4 (13,52,54, 64,68), which ought to make us suspect that this is not just a list of moral precepts, but something close to the Beatitudes of Jesus. To *love* fasting is very different than merely accepting a regulation or even working for a reward. What is "loved" has been internalized and made one's own. Cassian puts great emphasis on the need to move from conformity to love (see *inst*. 4.39,3: "the love of the good for itself," which appears in RB 7.69 as "delight in virtue"). See Kardong, 15.249-263; see *Index:* Love.

14.

Assist the poor (Pauperes recreare) does not apply directly to cenobitic monks, who do not have personal possessions to bestow. Nevertheless, the community should be ready to assist the needy in any way it can. At times Benedict indicates a personal experience of poverty (48.7), but he usually speaks of others as "the poor" (65.9; 66.3). See Böckmann, 1.131-165. *Recreare* is not easy to translate. No doubt the word refers to the food, clothing and shelter that is traditionally supplied by monks to the needy who come to the door. If the *RB 1980* translation "Relieve the condition of the poor" refers to structural improvements aimed at the systematic eradication of poverty, then it is anachronistic. This, of course, does not mean modern monks should ignore these problems, nor that they *do* ignore them. See *Index:* Poor.

19.

After this series of works of mercy, Benedict omits RM 3.20-21, on loans and almsgiving, no doubt as inapplicable to cenobites.

20.

strangers to the world's way of acting (saeculi actibus se facere alienum) seems well-suited to monks, who leave "the world" to lead a secluded life *(fuga mundi).* Yet this connotation is unlikely, given the biblical roots of the verse and its position in the list of RB 4. If the scriptural source is James 1:27 (see *RB 1980,* 591), then no ascetical meaning is likely in a passage that is discussing practical charity. James's point is that "the world" is cynical about selfless charity. RB 4.20-21 seem to form a generalized heading for a list of practical prohibitions (4.22-29), just as 4.10 did for the previous section. M. Casey, 6.37-46, thinks this verse must be understood together with the one that follows: we leave

aside whatever prevents us from following Christ. That Benedict does not despise the world is clear from vv. 14-19, which urge service of neighbor. Compared to the Master, Benedict is considerably less pessimistic about "the world." See Kardong, 30.184-204; Böckmann, 5.304-322. See *Index:* World.

21.

Prefer nothing to the love of Christ (Nihil amore Christi praeponere). The question here is whether this refers to Christ's love for us or our love for Christ? The former seems likely if v. 21 is taken as parallel to the preceding verse. Then "the love of Christ" is antithetical to the "world's way of acting." As used in the special biblical and Benedictine sense, the latter is sin, whereas "Christ's way of acting" refers to his sacrificial love on the cross. Along the same line is a passage from Cyprian, *domin. orat.* 15: "Prefer nothing to Christ, for he preferred nothing to us." This is again a reference to Christ's selfless gift of himself for the life of the world. See Halflants, 2.112-121.

22.

Do not act under the impulse of anger (Iram non perficere). This is not a prohibition of anger as such, which is a legitimate and healthy emotion when evil is encountered. The point here seems to be to ensure that our actions are shaped by reason as well as emotion. See Kardong, 22.3-16.

23.

Do not wait for vengeance (Iracundiae tempus non reservare), literally, "Do not hold back the time of wrath." A spontaneous eruption of justified anger may be preferable to smoldering resentment which grows over time. This verse serves as a bridge from anger (v. 22) to internal aggressivity (24,25,26). See Kardong, 22.3-16.

25.

Do not give a false peace (Pacem falsam non dare). In a close-knit and public society such as a Mediterranean village or Benedictine monastery, internal resentment naturally breeds deception, for one must maintain the daily signs that one is at peace with the other members. After this verse, Benedict omits RM 3.28-30 concerning fidelity (28), detraction (29) and the fulfillment of oaths (30). He may have wanted to avoid repetition, but RM 3.29 is given in RB 4.40. See *Index:* Peace.

27.

Do not swear oaths for fear of swearing falsely (Non jurare ne forte periuret). Benedict omits *amare* of RM 3.32, thus returning to Matthew 5:33-37. Yet the Master may wish to convey the patristic interpretation

(e.g., Ambrose, *de inst. virg.* 2.38; Augustine, *de mend.* 28) whereby the fault is seen to lie not in this or that oath, but in the habitual use of oaths. See Vogüé, 4.149-150. *Jurare . . . perjuret* is an example of the Late Latin penchant for repeating the simple root in a compound (Lentini, 97). If false swearing is the result of too much swearing, this is one way of expressing the idea, for *per* makes the verb intensive.

28.

Truth both in your heart and in your mouth (Veritatem ex corde et ore proferre). If RM/RB are following Matthew 5:34-37 here, as seems likely, this verse simply calls for candor without any of the mental reservations so dear to certain moralists.

29-33.

The Master continues to follow Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (5:38-48) in these five verses, all of which teach an ethic at radical variance with the normal human impulse to return evil for evil. To judge from its frequent appearance in patristic literature, this very demanding ethic was not discarded as impractical by the early Church.

31.

Love your enemies (Inimicos diligere). RM 3.36 adds "more than your friends," which goes beyond Scripture and is dropped by Benedict.

32.

instead (magis) emphasizes that it is not enough to merely refrain from returning curse for curse, for that would leave a vacuum in place of evil.

33.

on behalf of justice (pro justitia) is based on Matthew 5:10 and shows that the ethic of the Sermon of the Mount is not mere passivity, but rather "nonviolent resistance." This means that one is persecuted because of the pursuit of justice. In the face of such persecution, one refuses to return evil for evil, but does not abandon the pursuit. See Kardong, 16.43-73; see *Index:* Truth.

34-39.

This series of prohibitions, unlike the one that precedes it from the Sermon on the Mount (29-33), is drawn from the conventional moral wisdom of the age. Nonetheless, most of the verses reflect a NT paraenetic background. What is more, a life of radical Christian discipleship cannot be built on a dissolute moral foundation. The series "proud, wine-drinker, glutton" *(superbus, vinolentus, edax)* is also found in RB

31.1 on the cellarer, but in a different order and with different vocabulary: *sobrius, edax, non elatus*.

34.

proud (superbus). Although Benedict devotes a large chapter (7) to the virtue of humility, neither he nor his literary source in RM 10 mention the corresponding vice of *superbia* in that chapter. By beginning this section with a warning against pride, the author undercuts two tendencies in the ascetical movement: (1) pride in personal achievement; (2) a disdain for the body. One of Cassian's insistent themes is that the soul needs to be held in check quite as firmly as the body (*inst*. 3.8,3). See Holzherr, 85.

35.

a great wine-drinker (vinolentum) does not reflect a puritanistic hatred of alcohol as such, nor any awareness of the illness of alcoholism. As RB 40 makes abundantly clear, Benedict just does not want inebriation in his monastery.

36.

edax (glutton) is the counterpart of *vinolentum:* someone who simply eats too much. RB 39 is devoted entirely to the amount of food to be made available in the refectory, while RB 41 carefully regulates the times for meals in the monastic horarium. Thus Vogüé, 9.27-36, can claim with some justification that modern monks do not take this matter as seriously as their founder.

37.

indulge in excessive sleep (somnulentum) is not directed against chronic drowsiness and other true sleeping disorders, but deliberate and systematic sloth (Lentini, 99).

38.

loafer (pigrum). Laziness is often castigated as particularly obnoxious to Benedict (Lentini, 99), but in fact this is the sole appearance of the word in RB. Sometimes authors erect a vast ideology on monastic industry on a few scraps of data from RB (e.g., 48.1,8), but this is mostly imagination. Sometimes historical circumstances make monasteries productive; other times meaningful work is hard come by. In any case, the Bible has rather little to say about the matter of work. Kardong, 3.165-171; Peifer, 373–396.

39.

grumbler (murmuriosum). There are few things Benedict likes less than grumbling: see the twelve uses of *murmur* in *RB 1980,* 528. This

intense dislike, which is much more pronounced than in RM, may derive from the very nature of cenobitism as close communal living, or it may result from the special historical experience of Benedict. A third possibility is that the "murmuring" of the Exodus (Exod 15:24; 16:7) is a biblical key to this theme in the monastic rules. Like the chosen people, monks and all Christians are privileged recipients of God's liberating grace; for either of them to grumble shows a fundamental lack of gratitude for their own blessedness. See Kardong, 22.8; 21.197. See *Index:* Murmur.

40.

runs down the reputation of others (detractorem) is probably paired with *murmuriosum* on the basis of Wisdom 1:11. The Master is lacking this verse, though the same idea appears as *non amare (love) detrahere* in RM 3.29.

42-43.

These two verses, appearing in the midst of a series of general Christian maxims, may have come from the bitter Pelagian controversy of the century before and leading up to Benedict. As they stand, they definitely reflect the Augustinian emphasis on grace alone. In fact, they may be based on *serm.* 96.2, so close are they in wording. If that is the case, then apparently the Master found Augustine's anti-humanism excessive. Therefore, he wrote: "As for evil, know that you are the author and impute it to the *devil* and yourself." Benedict has removed the devil and added "always." Therefore, he deliberately reverts to Augustine's rigor, perhaps to counterbalance the "softer," more humanistic statements he has made in Prol 4 and elsewhere (Lentini, 100). Vogüé (4.200) thinks that *plusquam* means "rather than" in RM 3.46, since that is its usual meaning in RM. He agrees, though, that Benedict heightens the anti-Pelagianism of this passage. For a general study of this question, see Vaggagini, 17–83. See *Index:* Grace, Pelagianism.

46.

Long . . . with the desire of your soul (Desiderare . . . omni concupiscentia spiritali) is one of the most provocative, albeit troubling, sentences in RB. Benedict has added *concupiscentia* to the Master, who probably would have found it shocking. Benedict himself criticizes carnal desire in many places (4.6,12,59,64) in this very chapter. No doubt the adjective *spiritali* saves the concept from absurdity, but it is also important to understand *spiritali* in the strong sense of pneumatology: the Holy Spirit has been poured into our hearts and draws us to the Father if we will be drawn. Yet the carnal thrust of *desiderare* and

concupiscentia should not be suppressed, for the longing of our whole self is meant, body and soul. Without discipline of the body, which is highlighted in many of the maxims of RB 4, this longing will be self-centered. Only the Holy Spirit can fully heal our passions and turn them to God and the good of others. It is a misunderstanding of the problem to see ascesis and spirituality as a crushing of passion; rather they are meant to inflame our thirst for God. See Bamberg, 11–18; Casey, 2 passim. See *Index:* Desire.

47.

Keep an eye on death (Mortem . . . ante oculos suspectam habere), literally, "keep death suspect before your eyes." The suspicion is not whether one will eventually die, but whether that death will occur very soon (Vogüé, 19.25-38). Although the NT indirectly teaches the same thing when it commands vigilance toward the coming of the Son of Man, who will "come like a thief in the night" (Matt 24:43), there is little talk of death itself as an object of meditation. The idea is more frequent in the thought of the early monks, e.g., *verba sen.* 7.35; Cassian, *inst.* 12.35. Vogüé admits that this thought is not a very effective deterrent to sin, but it should relativize our absorption in fleeting, transitory affairs. In tandem with RB 4.46, death itself can be seen as the necessary and desirable doorway to eternal life. See also Sipe, 96–107. See *Index:* Death.

48-54.

These seven aphorisms all relate to self-control. They seem to be drawn mainly from monastic rather than biblical sources, with Cassian especially predominant.

49.

God sees you (Deum se respicere) is closely connected to the first step of humility (RM 10.13; RB 7.13), which makes this point with great force. Lentini, 102, thinks the thought is positive as well as negative: God watches us as a caring father as well as a judge. Because this verse seems to form a pair with its predecessor *(omni hora . . . omni loco),* the judging element seems stronger. In this series it is a deterrent to motivate self-control; elsewhere in the Rule it is used to promote respect for the weak. See Kardong, 4.84-86.

50.

Manifest them to a spiritual elder (seniori spiritali patefacere) is added by Benedict to RB 3.56. The presence of spiritual counselors in addition to the abbot is also presented in RB 46.5, but quite absent from the Rule of the Master. It lends a helpful specificity to the notion of smashing temptations against the rock of Christ. See *Index:* Senior.

bad thoughts (cogitationes malas). Here and in RB Prol 28 and 7.44, "thoughts" are equivalent to bad thoughts or temptations. But in the ascetic-contemplative language of Eastern monasticism, *logismoi* refers to *all* the contents of the mind, good, bad and indifferent. For them, spiritual direction consists in the revelation of all this psychic material to the elder for discernment. Even though popular tradition has treated the classic list of "thoughts" as seen in Cassian's *inst*. 5-12 as capital sins, that is too narrow a definition. "Thoughts," like feelings and dreams, are the natural and inevitable content of the mind. They can tell us much about the state of our heart if analyzed with care. See *Index:* Thought.

51-54.

A set of four maxims concerning the use of speech. Other sections of RB dealing with the same subject are chapters 6 and 7.56-61, the ninth, tenth and eleventh steps of humility. See *Index:* Speech.

51.

evil and perverse (malo vel pravo) is probably a standard word combination, with no particular distinction implied (Lentini, 103). As it often does in RM/RB, *vel* here means "and," not "or."

52.

Do not become accustomed to long-winded conversations (Loqui non amare). Although *amare* can mean a passion toward some value (see note 4.13), it can also mean "have the custom of" (Blaise, s.v. *amo,* 2) as is probably the case with the negative maxims in 4.52,54 and 68. For example, in this verse the prohibition is not against all talk but constant chitchat and endless coffee-sessions. It should be added that some people do love to talk and are addicted to it.

53.

Do not engage in babbling (Verba vana . . . non loqui). Benedict has omitted *ex toto* (absolutely) from this verse of the Master, perhaps because he feels that a lighthearted remark (even some tomfoolery) now and then is a tonic for morale in a monastery. RB 49.7 as much as admits that ordinary monastic life includes some humor. Just as his retention of *amare* in 4.52 and 54 shows a moderate spirit, so the omission of *ex toto* does the same here. Except for RB 6, Benedict takes a realistic position on the question of speech and silence. See *Index:* Speech.

54.

explosive laughter (risum . . . excussum). It is not hard to imagine that raucous guffawing is destructive of a contemplative atmosphere. In ancient times, comedy usually meant ribaldry. Nevertheless, Benedict

follows the Master in avoiding any total prohibition of laughter. The reason probably rests on at least two bases: (1) Common sense and an intuitive knowledge of mental health suggest that a sense of humor is a valuable gift. As the ancients noted, only the human animal is risible. (2) Even more important is the centrality of joy in the Christian life, which Benedict clearly recognizes in Prol 49 and 49.6. Those who distinguish between joy and laughter can probably make a case for their thinking, but the general prohibition of laughter is often a sign of an unhappy authority that wishes to make others unhappy as well. See Resnick, 90–100; Wright, 167–175; see *Index:* Laughter.

55-58.

These verses cohere well, since holy reading should lead to prayer (55-56), and this prayer ought to touch on our personal moral and spiritual lives, past and future (57-58). Moreover, the chatter and ribaldry prohibited in 51-54 are an obstacle to a serious prayer life.

55.

Listen intently to holy reading (Lectiones sanctas libenter audire) seems to refer to the common monastic practice of public reading, which was the only form of *lectio divina* for the Master (see RM 50). Benedict, however, also has private *lectio* (RB 48.17-21). The word *libenter* (intently) probably hints at the difficulty Mediterranean people have in refraining from comment and chatter during assemblies. This point is clear in the pastoral sermons of Caesarius of Arles, a contemporary of both the Master and Benedict (*serm.* 75.2). See Vogüé, 20.11-27; see *Index:* Lectio Divina.

56.

Give yourself frequently to prayer (Orationi frequenter incumbere) does not follow entirely logically from the preceding aphorism, since one would then lose the train of the reading. This anomaly may result from the transfer of these verses from the private to the public sphere. Thus Jerome, *ep.* 58.6, advises reading and prayer, but this is for the person alone in the cell. In that text, and others like it, *incumbere* may be taken literally to mean physical prostration, but in RB 4.56 that is quite impossible. See Vogüé, previous note. If taken apart from the preceding verse, this maxim can be read as an exhortation to "continual prayer," which is an ideal present in Scripture (1 Thess 5:17) and the monastic writers (Cassian, *inst.* 2.10,3; *conf.* 9.2). See Timko, 395–413; Vogüé, 24.113-139; see *Index:* Prayer.

57.

tears and groaning (lacrimis vel gemitu) is another reference to private

prayer and not the choral office, where this behavior would be disruptive. Hard as it may be for us to fathom, tears were greatly prized in early monasticism as a divine gift for the expression of compunction for sin. That Benedict understands no contradiction between compunction and joy can be seen in RB 49.4,7, where they are mentioned in the same breath. For the ancients, it was a great joy to be able to weep for one's sins. See Gale, 13–30; Hausherr, 3 passim; Casey, 4.103-120; Riggi, 681–706. See *Index:* Tears.

58.

for the future (de cetero) could also mean "in addition," as it does in RB 71.4, but that makes little sense here (although it is the translation of Rochais and Schmitz). Seneca, *Dial.* 3.8,1 uses it to refer to the future. Catholic piety has always connected a firm purpose of amendment to the confession of sins.

59.

Do not carry out the urgings of the flesh (Desideria carnis non efficere) is a quote of Galatians 5:16, which appears to be aimed against hedonism. However, for Paul *sarx* (flesh) is not just the carnal order but all that opposes itself to the divine will. Whether RM/RB understand Galatians 5:16 that way is unsure, but the proximate context is not concerned with "sins of the flesh." In fact, only vv. 35-38 in this long chapter pertain to that topic. See *Index:* Desire.

60.

Hate your own will (Voluntatem propriam odire) has the same shock-power as certain biblical passages ("Tear our your eye!") that are meant to jolt us awake. In so far as it is an integral component of our being, we cannot dispense with our will; therefore it is not to be rejected. Lentini, 105, suggests that *voluntatem* here must mean "spirit." Just as the "flesh" wants to pull us down, so the "spirit" has aspirations to soar—without maintaining creaturely submission to God. RB 7.19-25 also cautions against domination by either flesh or spirit, using the same vocabulary as RB 4.59-60. See *Index:* Hate, Will.

61.

even if he—God forbid—act otherwise (etiamsi ipse aliter—quod absit! —agat) is an addition to the Master's text (3.67). The latter rarely, if ever, admits the abbot's fallibility (Vogüé, 1.463). In Matthew 23:3, the hypocrisy is that of the Pharisees. The notion of obeying an abbot despite his obvious defects is typical of cenobitism, where one is committed to the authority of a community rather than an individual. In a guru system such as seems to have obtained in Egyptian anchoritism,

one was free to abandon a master who forfeited respect by revealing clay feet. See *Index:* Disciple, Master.

62.

holy (sanctum). Benedict has truncated the dictum of RB 3.68, which speaks of holiness as a kind of compelling quality that forces the acknowledgment of others. My translation of *quod* treats it as a pronoun rather than a causal conjunction, for the latter gives the false idea that one becomes holy in order to gain a reputation for sanctity. Lentini, 106, quotes Sulpicius Severus: "Seek to be holy rather than called holy, for it helps no one to be called that which one is not" (*ep. sor.* 17). RB 4.62 is closely patterned on the early martyrology called *Passio Juliani et Basilissae* (46). The same source echoes in RB 4.10,13-15,20-23. It is even more evident throughout RM 3, but in this verse Benedict quotes it more closely than RM does. This suggests that the text of RM that Benedict used was different for this verse than the one we now have (Vogüé, 4.133-138).

63.

put into . . . action (adimplere) is a favorite theme of Benedict, but especially prominent in the Prologue (1,21,22,29,35). See *Index:* Action. RB 4.61,62,63 form a triad of obedience, integrity and action.

64.

Love chastity (Castitatem amare). Here the primary meaning of *amare* seems called for, and not a reference to habit (see notes for 4.13 and 4.52). This is Benedict's only mention of *castitas,* but Cassian treats it as a major theme in *inst*. 6, *conf.* 12 and 22, where he insists that until one *loves* purity, one is only continent, not chaste (see Kardong, 15.249-262). And since chastity is a matter of love, one cannot analyze it (*conf.* 12.12; Holzherr, 92–93). See Halflants, 1.317-321.

65.

Hate no one (Nullum odire) could be taken as a pair with the previous verse, or as the beginning of a final unit on human relations (65-73). To hate no one seems less Christian than the love of enemies, but Cassian (*conf.* 16.4,4) suggests it is a useful minimum. Since the Jewish Bible frequently expresses a tribal ethic of hatred for other nations, Christian writers found it needed modification on this point, e.g., Leviticus 19:17; *Didache* 1,1–2,7. Although tribalism and ethnic hatred are usually thought of as a characteristic of premodern times, both of them are rearing their ugly heads at the end of the twentieth century. See Vogüé, 16.3-9. See *Index:* Hate.

66-67.

Do not be jealous (Zelum non habere). As St. Benedict carefully explains in RB 72.1-2, there is good zeal and there is bad zeal. Combined with envy *(invidia),* as in the next verse, bad zeal is usually called "jealousy." It is the fear of losing a precious possession, while envy is the desire to possess what another has. *Zelum* and *invidia* are also combined in RB 65.22. See *Index:* Jealousy.

68.

Do not be habitually quarrelsome (Contentionem non amare), literally, "Do not love quarreling." In a sinful world, conflict is inevitable but contentiousness is not. See *Index:* Love.

70-71.

Respect the seniors. Love the juniors. (Et seniores venerare, juniores diligere). In the hierarchical world of Benedict (see RB 63), mutual relations are never perfectly symmetrical: one *loves* a junior and *respects* a senior (see esp. 63.10-11). Of course, love is the Christian basis of all social relations, and it is also the foundation of respect, but the latter is also based on accumulated wisdom. This wisdom makes a senior particularly valuable as a counselor (see 46.5-6). Nonetheless, juniors are not entirely devoid of wisdom, as is shown in RB 3.3. RB 4.70-71 have been added to RM, which has no hierarchical system at all, except the towering eminence of the abbot. See M. Matthei and E. Contreras, 31–67.

72.

in the love of Christ (in Christi amore). To judge from RB 7.69 and 63.13, the genitive here is objective: because one loves Christ and recognizes him even in the enemy, one therefore loves the enemy. Theologically, however, it is only because of Christ's love for us on the cross and in grace that we can do something as "unnatural" as to love enemies (see note 4.65). Though he and RM both add Christ at the end of the Ladder of Humility, Benedict alone does so at the end of the list of Tools of Good Works (Holzherr, 94). See *Index:* Christ, Love.

a quarrel (discordante). Perhaps for stylistic reasons, Benedict has substituted *discordante* for *inimico* of RM 3.75, since the latter word appeared in the previous verse. The change is also substantive, however, since *discordia* means a temporary quarrel, while a real enemy is of long-standing. Benedict is realistic enough to know that not all conflicts can be settled by sundown. Ephesians 4:26 demands we put aside wrath by sundown but long enmity is not merely a matter of anger.

75-78.

Although Benedict has stayed close to RM throughout this chapter,

here at the close there is a significant change. The Master ends the long chapter 3 with no mention of the monastery, but appends three tiny chapters (4–6), the last of which ends with the monastery as workshop. Benedict reduces the clutter of RM 3.82–RM 6 to a clear, simple monastic ending. Both authors show that the monk has a special context for practicing the Tools: stable existence in the monastic enclosure. As Lentini, 111, notes, this large and important chapter ends fittingly with a noble formulation in "limpid and dignified style."

75.

tools of the spiritual craft (instrumenta artis spiritalis) may be a reference to Cassian's *conf.* 1.7, but the approach is rather different. Cassian emphasizes the need to concentrate on the end product (purity of heart) rather than the means used to produce it (monastic practices). Benedict, however, speaks somewhat illogically about returning the tools themselves (4.76), probably under the influence of RB 32 and 35.10 (on returning precious tools after use). See Sutera, 348–356; Kardong, 7.233-252. See *Index:* Tools.

76.

Benedict compresses into one verse RM 3.79-82, which says virtually the same thing. The idea of receiving a reward *(merces)* for our good work may seem somewhat materialistic, but it fits well with the concrete imagery of tools and workshop. Further, Benedict has no hesitation whatever in promising a heavenly reward as motivation: *mereor* and its cognates appear no less than seventeen times in RB. On the other hand, the materiality of the reward (heaven), which is spelled out in graphic detail in RM 3.84-95, is quietly dropped by Benedict. See *Index:* Merit. The image of the monk as workman turns up early in RB Prol 14, where Wisdom calls "her worker" to salvation. It occurs again in a very signicant passage at the end of the Ladder of Humility (7.70) where the Lord sends his Holy Spirit to "his worker" purified of his sins through humility. The implication of these texts, as well as here in 4.76, is that the "work" of the monk is the whole monastic life. See Hausherr, 2.181-204. The image of "workshop/workman" is only one of the rather active, aggressive pictures Benedict paints of monastic existence (see comments on "school," "fight," "run" in Prologue Overview). Yet this does not mean that Benedict is particularly work-oriented. See notes on RB 48; Kardong, 25.93-104. See *Index:* Work.

we will receive that reward (merces recompensabitur) is strictly speaking a tautology: the reward will be rewarded. This is not unusual in Late Latin or common parlance (Lentini, 110).

77.

Eye has not seen (Quod oculus non vidit). Benedict uses 1 Corinthians 2:9 in a modified form to replace the long, picaresque description of heaven in RM 3.85-94. Since he has done something very similar at the end of RB 7, it is apparent that this is a deliberate strategy. Rather than a mere shortening technique, this could well be a sign that Benedict wants to deemphasize the extreme future eschatology of the Master, while putting more stress on the present dimensions of the kingdom of God. See Kardong, 14.100-104; see *Index:* Experience, Holiness, Joy. Benedict's choice of 1 Corinthians 2:9 is perfect, for it places the conclusion to the "tools" precisely where it belongs, namely, union with God. It may also be noted that some of the "tools" are *not* ascetical means to union, but virtually akin to union itself. This particularly applies to verses pertaining to love. See *Index:* Love, Tools.

who love him (qui diligunt illum) forms an inclusion with RB 4.1: *Dominum Deum diligere*. This replaces a similar inclusion in RM 3.1,83, where the Master repeats *timere* (fear). The two ideas, love and fear, are not nearly as dissimilar in the Bible and the early Church as they are in our eyes. See *Index:* Fear.

78.

eagerly (diligenter) ordinarily means "carefully," but the root is from *diligo,* "to love." In fact, the verb appears four times in RB 4, and most notably in the preceding verse. The point here seems to be a glad and ready spirit (see RB 5.14-19; RB 72) rather than meticulous craftsmanship. This is probably connected to Benedict's themes of running. See Kardong, 6.155-172; Kardong, 9; see *Index:* Love, Running.

workshop (officina) goes along with the theme of tools, which has shaped the whole chapter. To connect the concepts of "workshop" and "monastery" seems much more natural than the corresponding passage of RM 6.1-2, where the comparison is made to the human body. On the other hand, it makes less sense to say the workshop *is* "stability," as Benedict does; the Master more logically says that we accomplish the divine work by means of perseverance (RM 6.1-2). Obviously "stability" here refers to more than simple location. See *Index:* Tools, Work.

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A mere glance at RB 4 shows that it is quite unlike what precedes it. After fairly discursive and well-developed literary units in the Prologue and the first three chapters, we have here what appears to be a mere list of maxims. If this list has a structure or a logic, it does not

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easily reveal itself. One helpful approach to the material is to compare it with RM 3–6, which it closely follows. Such a comparative study risks bogging down in minutiae which are out of place in a study such as this, but we still need to take RM 3–6 seriously. For an exhaustive literary and historical analysis of both treatises, see Vogüé, 4.119-223.

One obvious change that Benedict has made in his source is to reduce four chapters to one. Actually, RM 4–5 are simply short lists of vices and virtues. By eliminating this material, Benedict does not seem to have lost anything essential, and he has certainly gained something in compactness and unity.

A. Preliminary Questions

1. Redactional History

First we must ask why the author of the Rule has inserted this material at this point? One possibility could be that RB 4 is given as a list of teachings that the abbot must inculcate into the minds of the community. Following as it does on the abbatial chapter (RB 2: RB 3 is a later addition), it may well be a program of abbatial *doctrina*. Nonethe-less, the list itself seems to shift ground slightly toward the end by speaking of the abbot in the third person: "Obey the abbot's orders in all things, even if he—God forbid—acts otherwise" (4.61). In this way it may prepare us for the following three chapters on bedrock monastic virtues: obedience, silence, humility (RB 5–7). These chapters are addressed to both the abbot and the monks. See Vogüé 4.126-127.

A second theory about the overall significance of RB 4 suggests that it was originally part of a treatise called *Actus militiae cordis* (see RM 10.121, *explicit*) that included the current Thema of RM, RM 3–6 and RM 7–10. This treatise must have been primarily an ethical exhortation to the monk, with the first emphasis on basic Christian virtues (Prol), the middle section including both common and monastic virtues (RM 3–6) and the final part addressing specific monastic issues (RM 7–10). The materials on the kinds of monks, abbot and the council (RM 1–2; RB 1–3) were inserted later into this scheme. See Manning, 3.vi-xxi.

Vogüé does not believe in this second theory, but he does point to numerous connections between the Prologue, RB 4 and RB 5–7. Probably, his data in this regard could be used to bolster Manning's theory rather than his own. At any rate, it is striking that RM 3–6 has so little about it that is monastic. Even after Benedict adds certain monasticizing touches, the overall impression is of a catechetical list that could have been used for early Christian converts.

This should remind us that in its beginnings, the monastic movement was not all that distinct from Christianity itself. Many people became

Christians at the same time they took the habit. That was especially true in the fourth century, when the Rule of Basil is preceded by the *Moralia,* a long list of NT moral principles that a convert-monk must accept.

By the time of Benedict no doubt most recruits were Christian, but it was apparently still necessary to educate them in basic gospel living. Since the circumstances required it, the monastic legislators faced up to the reality of the situation. Again at the end of the twentieth century, monasteries can no longer assume that their recruits will be well-versed in basic Christian doctrine. In such circumstances, we can only respond by catechizing our novices at the level they need. One must become a Christian before one can become a Christian monk.

2. Literary Sources

Clearly, the primary source of this chapter is the Bible itself. Many of the verses are straight quotations from Scripture. Generally speaking, the Master quotes these texts by heart, but Benedict tends to correct them where he remembers them more accurately. This is not to say that RM 3–6 falsifies the biblical text, but merely to note that RB 4 is closer to the actual text of the Bible.

Since this chapter is so basically Christian in its teaching, it is not surprising to learn that it shares a structural form with certain other early Christian documents. The material starts with two commandments on love, the Decalogue and the Golden Rule, and this order is mirrored in the famous *Didache* (1–2) and the obscure *Syntagma* and *Pistis* of a Church council of A.D. 362 (PG 28.836; 1639).

Another early text is even more interesting for its affinities to these chapters. The apocryphal *Passio Juliani et Basilissae* 46 contains a list of twenty maxims that are so similar to parts of RM 3 that the two documents must be somehow related (see RB 4.13-15; 20-23; 29; 62). Vogüé, 4.133-138, thinks that *pass. Julian. et Bas.* (probably sixth–seventh centuries) depends on the same source as RM 3, yet the apocryphal text makes far different use of the source than do RM/RB. They use it for monastic ethics, whereas the apocryphal text uses it for magical procedures! See also note 4.62.

As a general rule, Benedict is much less willing to quote apocryphal sources than is the Master. This difference comes out in regard to RM 3.85-94, which is based on the *Visio Pauli* 21–22. Benedict lacks this rather flamboyant, naive description of heaven, giving us instead the beautifully succinct 1 Corinthians 2:9. Yet it is not at all certain that Benedict has dropped these nine verses; Vogüé, 4.169-171, guesses that the material was added to the text of RM after Benedict copied it.

A survey of the sources lying behind RB 4 seems to indicate a certain pattern: 1-9 Bible; 10-33 *Passio;* 34-40 Bible; 41-61 less of both; 62-74

Bible-*Passio*. The movement here seems to be from more to less Bible, but the pattern is not crystal-clear (Vogüé, 4.164-165). On the alternation of ascesis and charity in the chapter, see note 4.10.

B. An Outline of the Chapter with Its Contents

In this part, we follow the outline of the massive study of Vogüé, who devotes no less than 102 pages of his great commentary to RM 3/RB 4! His findings are largely tentative, but they do illuminate the contours of the chapter and indicate where the real questions lie. While most theories about the structure of this series of aphorisms must remain conjectural, we must attempt to see how they interrelate. Depending on the context, the same maxim can mean very different things. For an example of how sharp analysis can change the real meaning of an apparently simple maxim, see Casey, 6.37-46. Of course, the maxims must also be understood in the context of the entire Rule, e.g., "desire" in 4.46 (see note).

1. General Frame

It is probably no coincidence that Benedict begins and ends (vv. 1 and 74) with a strong vertical reference: love God and hope in him. Furthermore, RB 4.41-43 at the center of the chapter dwell on this same theme, insisting that all the good we do is really the work of God. In this way, the chapter is framed in a powerfully theological way, which is quite consistent with the general ethos of the Rule. See Vogüé, 4.164.

Part one: duties toward the neighbor (1-40). Nevertheless, the basic thrust of the first half of the chapter is not vertical but horizontal. Christian social duties are the main theme of this part, which is, as we have seen, largely composed of classic biblical materials such as the love commandment, the Decalogue and the Golden Rule. In addition to that, the chapter turns more toward the New Testament in 4.20-33, where it comments on Matthew 5:20-48. That part of Matthew is the famous Sermon on the Mount, which suggests that RB 4 shares in the radicality of Jesus' message.

Although Benedict follows the Master quite closely throughout this part, he does make changes, and these can be a clue to his distinctive line of thought. The first alteration happens in the very first line: Benedict drops a Trinitarian formula of the Master that greatly complicates the love commandment (RM 3.1). The result is that love takes a much more prominent place at the beginning of Benedict's chapter (see notes 4.1 and 4.20). This in itself is significant, for elsewhere (e.g., Prol 49; RB 7.67-68) he has followed the dubious Cassianic practice of placing love at the end of the ascetical ascent.

In 4.10-40, Benedict's changes mostly amount to minor omissions. He drops RM 3.20-21 and 28-30, presumably on the grounds that they do not apply to monks. In doing so, he asserts himself as an editor in careful control of what he is copying. In a couple of places, he has dropped *amare* from the text of the Master, who has added it to Scripture (see *Index:* Love). Thus in RM 3.32, we find "Do not love oath taking," whereas RB 4.27 simply has "Do not take oaths." Benedict seems to be returning to the simple prohibition of Matthew 5:33-37, but the Master is probably reflecting the patristic commentators who pointed out that the sin is not in the swearing, but in the habit of swearing.

On the other hand, the Master sometimes goes even beyond the radical ethic of Matthew. Thus RM 3.36 reads "Love enemies even more than friends." Benedict must find that excessive, for he returns to the biblical norm which says nothing of friends at all. In both cases listed here, Benedict prefers to hew closer to the scriptural text. This may not involve any significant ethical change, but it does show that the Abbot of Monte Cassino did not treat the biblical text lightly. Sometimes it indicates a certain moderating effect on the Master's material (see note 4.53).

Part two: duties toward the self (41-74). As we have seen, the Bible is less prominent as a source in this second part. As can be seen from a glance at a patristic apparatus (*RB 1980,* 182–184), the allusions in this part are mostly to early Church Fathers such as Cyprian. The content tends to be more personal and introspective, with emphasis on ascetical discipline. In this sense, the chapter does indeed move in the direction of the monastic, as distinct from the generally Christian, realm.

Along with the turn inward, this part also exhibits a generally eschatological concern. Starting with a statement about complete reliance on God for salvation now and in the future (RB 4.39-43), Benedict goes on to speak quite forcefully about the Last Things: judgment, hell, death, eternal life (44-47), and this same concern for the final time returns in a poignant prayer for final perseverance in 4.74.

In the second part of the chapter there also seem to be strong ties to other parts of the Rule (see note 4.34-39). For example, RB 4.44-49 bears a strong resemblance to 7.10-30, which is the first degree of humility (see notes 4.49 and 4.60). 4.50-54, on the other hand, has obvious correspondences with Prol 22–28 (see note 4.50). In the latter case, Vogüé, 4.158, feels that the material first existed in the Prologue and was later interpolated into the Instruments of Good Works. This process already happened in the Rule of the Master. Regarding the last maxims that comprise RB 4.62-74, it could be said that 4.63 is a general principle and that all that follows is by way of illustration. At this point, the source is again primarily biblical.

Benedict has exercised his editorial powers in two particular ways in part two. First, he has considerably toughened the Augustinian flavor of 4.41-43. Basically, we are told that God alone can accomplish good; the purely human contribution is intrinsically evil. This statement is even hardened by removing mention of the devil in 4.43, thereby leaving responsibility for evil squarely at the human doorstep. It is also worsened by the removal of the words "more than" in 4.42 and the addition of "always" in 4.43. The result is a theological dictum worthy of Augustine, but not very representative of ordinary Catholic teaching (see note 4.42-43).

There are numerous minute adjustments of the Master's material in RB 4.44-61, but in the very last section we see a larger change. Here Benedict has inserted 4.69-72 into the older text (Vogüé, 4.206-207). The result is to disrupt the logical flow of RM 3.74-75 on quarreling. More importantly, a monastic saying on the relations between seniors and juniors (RB 4.70-71) serves to bind the last few verses closer to the rest of Benedict's Rule (see note 4.70-71).

2. The Tools and the Workshop

Probably the most interesting differences between the Master and Benedict occur at the very beginning and the very end of the chapter. In his title, Benedict speaks of *instrumenta* (tools) rather than the *ars sancta* (spiritual art) of the Master. We might expect that this shift from process to concrete language would be reflected in the body of the chapter, but instead the "tools" are not mentioned again until 4.75. Although it is a vivid and memorable image, we will see that it does not necessarily contribute to the clarity of the exposition.

We have already noted that Benedict omits the rather outlandish description of heaven in RM 3.85-94 with a single exquisitely appropriate sentence from 1 Corinthians 2:9: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, what God has prepared for those who love him." Besides shortening a verbose passage, this shift may signal a conscious shift in eschatology between these two Rules. Although Vogüé, 4.119, thinks RM 3.85-94 was not in the manuscript Benedict used, he does not deny Benedict has omitted a similar naive, materialistic description of heaven at the end of the Ladder of Humility (RB 7). Very likely Benedict wishes to say two things about heaven: (a) heaven is God himself; (b) heaven is not confined to the other side of the grave. So far, we may say that he has improved upon his sources. See also notes 4.72 and 4.77.

In other respects, however, he is not so successful. On first blush, RB 4.75-76 also seems to be a step in the right direction. Here Benedict replaces an extraordinarily prolix passage of RM with a clear and simple statement: when we return the Tools of Good Works, we will be

rewarded. Yet the idea in itself is bewildering. The Master says we should return the "art," which does not make any more sense. No doubt they both mean that the implementation of the maxims given in the long list will merit a reward in heaven. The logical outcome of the image seems to be that the tools should be used to cultivate fruits of good works, which are then rewarded (see notes 4.75-76). We might also add that Benedict has avoided a complicated and basically unintelligible bodily metaphor of the Master at this point, as he often does. But his own comment that the monastery is a workshop which is "stability" does not make much sense either.

This may seem like a niggling sort of quibble, but in the context of ancient ascetical thought it is not negligible. If the ultimate source of the image of the spiritual art is Cassian, *conf.* 1.7, then it is clear that neither the Master nor Benedict is faithful to his mentor. For Cassian's thought on the matter is quite different. He insists that monastic practices are strictly instrumental, that is, they are of no importance in themselves but merely useful in producing a spiritual result, namely, "purity of heart" or the transformation of the human person. Perhaps RM/RB want to say the same thing, but they have not done so. In this regard, they would have done better to follow Cassian more closely. See Kardong, 7.240-243. On the other hand, we can say in defense of Benedict's talk of instruments that it has the value of showing that monastic life is not merely a matter of ideas. What is at stake is not just conceptual clarity, but the salvation of the whole human person. If we wish to attain that goal, we must take the means to do so. True, there is the perennial danger of mistaking means for ends. But there is equal danger of merely wishing for the end without undertaking a practical program to reach the goal. See Kardong, 14.82-105.

V: DE OBOEDIENTIA

[1]Primus humilitatis gradus est oboedientia sine mora. [2]Haec convenit his qui nihil sibi a Christo carius aliquid existimant. [3]Propter servitium sanctum quod professi sunt seu propter metum gehennae vel gloriam vitae aeternae, [4]mox aliquid imperatum a maiore fuerit, ac si divinitus imperetur moram pati nesciant in faciendo. [5]De quibus Dominus dicit: *Obauditu auris oboedivit mihi.* [6]Et item dicit doctoribus: *Qui vos audit me audit.* [7]Ergo hi tales, relinquentes statim quae sua sunt et voluntatem propriam deserentes, [8]mox exoccupatis manibus et quod agebant imperfectum relinquentes, vicino oboedientiae pede iubentis vocem factis sequuntur, [9]et veluti uno momento praedicta

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magistri iussio et perfecta discipuli opera, in velocitate timoris Dei, ambae res communiter citius explicantur.

[10]Quibus ad vitam aeternam gradiendi amor incumbit, [11]ideo angustam viam arripiunt—unde Dominus dicit: *Angusta via est quae ducit ad vitam*—[12]ut non suo arbitrio viventes vel desideriis suis et voluptatibus oboedientes, sed ambulantes alieno iudicio et imperio, in coenobiis degentes abbatem sibi praeesse desiderant. [13]Sine dubio hi tales illam Domini imitantur sententiam qua dicit: *Non veni facere voluntatem meam, sed eius qui misit me.*

[14]Sed haec ipsa oboedientia tunc acceptabilis erit Deo et dulcis hominibus, si quod iubetur non trepide, non tarde, non tepide, aut cum murmurio vel cum responso nolentis efficiatur, [15]quia oboedientia quae maioribus praebetur Deo exhibetur—ipse enim dixit: *Qui vos audit me audit.* [16]Et cum bono animo a discipulis praeberi oportet, quia *hilarem datorem diligit Deus.* [17]Nam, cum malo animo si oboedit discipulus et non solum ore sed etiam in corde si murmuraverit, [18]etiam si impleat iussionem, tamen acceptum iam non erit Deo qui cor eius respicit murmurantem, [19]et pro tali facto nullam consequitur gratiam; immo poenam murmurantium incurrit, si non cum satisfactione emendaverit.

RB 5: OBEDIENCE

1. The basic road to progress for the humble person is through prompt obedience. 2. This is characteristic of those who hold Christ more precious than all else. 3. For that reason, on account of the holy service they have professed, and because of the fear of hell and the glory of eternal life, 4. as soon as something is commanded by the superior, they waste no time in executing it as if it were divinely commanded. 5. The Lord says of them: "When he heard me, he obeyed me." 6. Likewise, he says to teachers: "Whoever listens to you listens to me." Therefore, such people immediately abandon their own affairs and put aside self-will. 8. They immediately empty their hands, dropping whatever they are doing to carry out with the quick step of obedience the order of the one who commands. 9. It is as if the order were given by the master and carried out by the disciple at the same instant. Both command and response take place almost simultaneously with an alacrity caused by the fear of the Lord. 10. It is love that drives these people to progress toward eternal life.

11. Therefore they seize on the narrow way, of which the Lord says: "The route that leads to life is narrow." 12. That is why they do not wish to live by their own lights, obeying their own desires and wants. Rather, they prefer to walk according to the judgment and command

of another, living in cenobitic community with an abbot over them. 13. Doubtless, people such as these imitate the Lord, who said: "I did not come to do my own will, but the will of the one who sent me."

14. But this same obedience will only be acceptable to God and humanly attractive if the command is not executed fearfully, slowly or listlessly, nor with murmuring or refusal. 15. For obedience given to superiors is given to God, who said: "Whoever listens to you, listens to me." 16. And it should be given gladly by disciples, for "God loves a cheerful giver." 17. If a disciple obeys grudgingly and murmurs not only out loud but internally, 18. even if he carries out the order, it will not be acceptable to God. For he sees the heart of the murmurer, 19. who will receive no thanks for such a deed. On the contrary if he does not make satisfaction, he will receive the penalty of murmurers.

RB 5 Notes

1.

The basic road to progress for the humble person (Primus humilitatis gradus). The beginning of RB 5 is identical to RB 7.10, but there the predicate is fear of the Lord, not instant obedience. In RB 7, it is clear that *gradus* means the rung of a ladder, which is the fundamental image of that chapter. *Primus* refers to the first of a series of twelve degrees. Here in the chapter on obedience, though, Benedict found the Master repeating the formula in a confusing way, so he tried to give the words a different tint. Apparently now *gradus* means forward movement, as it does also in 5.10, which forms an inclusion demarcating the first part of RB 5. In RB 5.10, Benedict has purposely replaced *ambulandi* with *gradiendi.* (Vogüé 2.466). In effect, rapid movement is the theme of 5.1-10.

Since the chapter on obedience has no serial structure like RB 7, *primus* no longer refers to the first number of a series. It must mean the primary entity. For both RM and RB, obedience is indeed primary (note Prol 2). Even in the chapter on humility, degrees two through five all pertain to obedience. It remains awkward, however, to translate the same words *(primus humilitatis gradus)* very differently within three chapters. In doing so, I part company with *RB 1980,* Rochais, Holzherr and Vogüé, but join forces with Lentini, Salzburg and Steidle. Moreover, different experts understand the redactional history of these chapters differently. Vogüé, 8.184-185, thinks RB 5.1 was written first, but with RB 7.10 in prospect. Borias, 15.59-67, thinks RB 7.10 is primary, with RB 5.1,10 written later and carefully retouched. A third interpretation is that of H. Vanderhoeven, 197–201, who thinks RB 5.1 should be rendered "The epitome of humility." For a detailed analysis of RB 5.1, see Borias.

2.

characteristic of (convenit). Since Benedict has (happily) eliminated the Master's distinction of instant obedience as proper to only the "perfect" disciple (RM 7.2), the verb loses some of its focus. On love for Christ, see notes for RB Prol 50; 4.10,21.

3.

"For that reason" has been added here on two accounts: (1) Since the main verb of vv. 3-4 is subjunctive *(nesciant),* it seems to be dependent on v. 2. Verse 4 also lacks a proper subordinating conjunction, for *mox* cannot serve that role. (2) Theologically, the reasons given in vv. 3-4 are not as Christian as that given in v. 2 (see Lentini, 113). Verses 2-4 are one long sentence in RM 7, but the result is even less elegant than RB 5.2-4.

service (servitium) can have a legal connotation, since it is what the monk "professes" (Lentini, 114) but there are richer theological possibilities. In Prol 45, the monastery is called the "school of the Lord's service" *(servitium),* which suggests that monastic life involves personal loyalty to Christ and not just blind duty. Furthermore, this service is based on Christ's own servanthood (see Phil 2:6-11), which liberated us from slavery to Satan. This word ties v. 3 closely to v. 2. See *Index:* Service.

glory (gloriam) replaces *riches* (divitias) of RM 7.3, perhaps in line with Benedict's dematerialization of heaven as the Master presents it (see note 4.77).

4.

The daunting doctrine of this verse is not original with RM/RB. Pachomius, *pr.* 30, demands instant obedience, and Cassian frequently (*inst.* 4.10,24,27; 12.32) speaks of the command of the superior as the voice of God. Whatever else one may say about this theory, it is clear that its dynamics are supernatural and not merely practical. Although Benedict drops the verb *audierint* (they hear) from the Master's text, the idea of listening is strongly implied here and explicit in vv. 5-6. In fact, it is basic to this whole chapter. It is a primary theme of RB, which introduces it in Prol 1 and ties it to obedience in Prol 2–3. See Holzherr, 98; Böckmann, 8.125-127; see *Index:* Listen.

5.

Psalm 18:45 has been altered from plural to singular by the Master, although the sentence lead-in *(De Quibus)* is plural. The original context of the psalm, namely, cringing submission of conquered enemies, seems rather inappropriate in a chapter stressing the cheerful and generous gift of self.

6.

teachers (doctoribus) is simply copied from RM 7.6, but it probably has a rather different meaning for Benedict than for the Master. RM 1.82 sets up the abbot-doctor as a teacher in the Church equal to the bishop. And the Master uses the term many times to refer to his abbot, who is a kind of all-knowing guru. Benedict uses the term *doctor* just this once, and rarely presents the abbot as a didactic figure. See *Index:* Teach.

Luke 10:16 seems to be based on the Hebrew notion of *shaliach* or agency, which gave the agent the same standing as the master in the signing of contracts (see *Jerome Biblical Commentary,* 1968 ed., 497–498). Because this passage of Luke is addressed to the 72 disciples and not the Twelve, some writers like Lentini, 115, think it is applicable to abbots as well as bishops. Although it is doubtful that Luke is being quite so precise, it is true that cenobitic authority is based on a similar understanding: Because the abbot speaks for the community in the name of God, the cenobite assumes his word is worthy of faith. This trust does not depend on the personal charism of the abbot as does anchoritic obedience. Nevertheless, should there be a serious lack of discernment in the abbot, the cenobitic system cannot function. Nor is the monk ever excused from the obligation of answering to his own conscience. The rather breathtaking equation in Luke 10:16 of divine and human authority must not be used as an excuse to sweep aside the need for careful, even painstaking search for truth by all parties in cenobitic life. See *Index:* Discernment.

7.

such people (hii tales) refers to those who obey immediately, as described in vv. 4-5.

immediately (statim) may be an allusion to the instant response of the disciples to Jesus' summons. They left nets and father to follow without question (see Matt 4:22; *RB 1980,* note 5.4).

self-will (voluntatem propriam) is an ambiguous concept, for it is not certain whether it means "personal will" (*RB 1980,* Rochais, Schmitz, Vogüé) or "self-will" (Steidle, Holzherr, Salzburg). The latter is intrinsically bad, while the former is not. In fact, we *may* not set aside our own will in any definitive sense, for it is a God-given gift and intrinsic to human maturity. Benedict here simply copies the Master without necessarily subscribing to his extremely negative view toward the human will. In RM Thp 40, we find: "See that whatever we choose by our own will is patently unjust." To judge from his overall tolerance, and even encouragement, of individual conscience and judgment (see

RB 49 and 68), Benedict does not subscribe to such a strange and tragic view of human depravity. RM 2.36-37 implies the same thing by assuring the monk complete immunity at the divine judgment, provided he has been perfectly obedient. Benedict crept carefully around that misguided dictum (note 2.39).

On the other hand, it is equally clear that self-will in its myriad forms is the worst enemy of all spiritual growth. To be focused on personal wants and projects means being correspondingly closed to the views of others and ultimately to the divine will. This is the true face of sin and the deadliest enemy of community life. It is the hardest aspect of sin to overcome, so it is not surprising that this is one of the hardest chapters in the Rule. See Holzherr, 100–101; see *Index:* Will.

8.

unfinished (imperfectum). Cassian, *inst.* 4.12, gives an example of such ready obedience: a monk-calligrapher stops copying in the middle of a letter in response to the signal for the Divine Office. This is not so much a matter of promptness or willingness to conform to a time-table as it is responsiveness to a signal that represents the call of God. See Kardong, 9; see *Index:* Perfection.

the quick step of obedience (vicino obedientiae pede) is a graphic image of ready obedience, resembling English expressions like "hop to it!" *Vicino* literally means "next," with the implication that one is always poised in readiness to obey God's call. It is what the French call *disponabilité*. Moreover, "running" is a frequent image of Benedict, and RB 5.8 is perhaps its strongest expression. See *Index:* Alacrity, Run.

9.

As Lentini, 116, points out this verse is stylistically remarkable for its wealth of repeated concepts: *veluti uno momento, in velocitate, citius* as well as *res ambae* and *communiter*.

master . . . disciple (magistri . . . discipuli) may echo the anchoritic milieu of the desert, where some masters were renowned as teachers of obedience. For his part, the Master has developed a two-track system of perfect-imperfect discipleship, in which the former are characterized precisely by their instant obedience, while the latter are allowed more time to react. By eliminating the second type (RM 7.10-21; 22-46), Benedict avoids a complicated and unwieldy system, but he leaves us with a much more demanding doctrine for all monks. He may wish to modify this stern ideology a bit in RB 68. See Kardong, 13.193-202; see *Index:* Disciple, Master.

fear of the Lord (timoris Dei) is a crucial concept in this verse because it shows that the whole discussion is about spiritual life and not about efficiency. Tyrants and dictators demand instant obedience, but they are hated for it. Armies require the same, but only to cope with the chaos of battle. Monastic obedience is strictly tied to faith in the living God, before whose will all delay implies the kind of sloth Benedict means to eliminate (notes Prol 2–3). See *Index:* Fear.

10.

This verse is something of a *crux interpretationis,* since it affects the overall interpretation of the chapter. We can consider it either the end and climax of RB 5.1-10, or the opening of the next unit. Since Benedict has omitted 36 verses of RM 7, it is hard to know what the open word *quibus* (to whom) now refers to. Perhaps more telling is Benedict's replacement of *ambulandi* (walk: RM 7.47) with *gradiendi* (progress). This may well create an inclusion with v. 1 and thereby set the real theme of 1-10: we progress toward God by our readiness to obey God's voice in God's agent (Borias, 15.59-67).

love (amor) functions here much as "fear" did in the previous verse, as a supernatural motive of action. For RM 7.47, however, love is characteristic only of perfect disciples; for Benedict it is what energizes all true disciples.

to progress (gradiendi) is strictly speaking a modifier of *amor:* "the love of progressing" but this seems to make less sense than what most translators have decided on: love is the ultimate motivation of progress and growth. See *Index:* Love.

11.

Therefore (Ideo) should be understood rather weakly here since we make this verse the beginning of the second paragraph of the chapter, with slight connections to what preceded. The general meaning might be that love wants to take the shortest way to its object. Due to sin, this way to God's will must be narrow, but it is still sure.

seize on (arripiunt) is stronger than just "take on." Clearly, the cenobite will not make much progress nor quickly, if the narrow way of obedience is merely accepted or put up with. This chapter is entirely devoted to joyful, ready obedience that is "seized on" as a plank of salvation.

narrow way (angusta via) is reserved by the Master for perfect disciples. He also claims in 7.22-46 that the Sarabaites wander along the broad way of no obedience. In Matthew 7:14, of course, every Christian is exhorted to take the narrow way, and Benedict returns closer to that spirit by prescribing the narrow way for all his monks. See *Index:* Way.

12.

That is why (Ut) seems to introduce a long result clause, but the main verb (*desiderant:* wish, prefer) is indicative and explanatory, probably of v. 11, the narrow way.

wants (voluptatibus) appears somewhat overstated, so some scribes inadvisedly changed it to voluntatibus (wishes). The difference is that the former may be hidden, unconscious drives that make it hard for me to obey even my own best will. One way to liberation can be to allow another to judge my situation. See *Index:* Desire.

walk (ambulantes) could be drawn from Jude 16: "walking according to their own desires." Jude is fulminating against unfaithful Christians who have somehow come into conflict with Church leadership.

cenobitic community (coenobiis) is a clear reference to RM 1/RB 1, where the cenobites live under a Rule and an abbot, but the Sarabaites do not. Benedict has eliminated the discussion of Sarabaites from RB 5 by dropping RM 7.22-46. Although this is the only direct reference to community in this chapter, in fact cenobitic obedience must always be understood in that context. Common life is simply impossible where people are not ready to submit to the general welfare in obedience. See *Index:* Cenobite.

wish, prefer (desiderant) like *arripiunt* (seize on) in the previous verse, indicates an active, conscious choice of obedience by the individual. The very idea of wishing to be under the spiritual authority of another is akin to love for Christ, because it is mysterious and inexplicable. Finally, *desiderant* may be a contrast to *voluptatibus:* one puts asides superficial wants in favor of what one truly needs.

the judgment of another (alieno judicio). Herwegen claimed that *judicium* always implies an objective decision, whereas *arbitrium* has the flavor of personal whim (see Böckmann, 8.119-120). This does not imply that the monk has abandoned all personal judgment. In choosing to live under a Rule and an abbot, one accepts basic norms decided by those authorities. Moreover, one assumes that the decisions of the abbot are conformed to the will of God. But the duty remains to monitor those decisions in the light of other norms: Scripture, Church teaching, conscience. See *Index:* Discernment.

13.

In contrast to 5.6 and 15, "Whoever listens to you, listens to me," in this verse Christ is the one who listens and obeys. As a human model, he is undoubtedly closer to us than as a divine authority, but there are still differences between our obedience and his. If we are to understand

with traditional theology that Christ is in constant, direct contact with the Father, then he always knew what was required of him. Other human beings, even with abbatial guidance, can never be certain of that. See *Index:* Obedience.

my own will (voluntatem meam) is not so much repudiated as conformed to the will of the Father. Just as Jesus certainly had a human, autonomous will that was not identical with the will of his divine Father, so too the cenobitic monk is not to be stripped of his will as is done to cult members. Nor is this usage of John 6:38 to be understood as an attack on the human will as depraved and inevitably skewed to evil. The crucial thing for a Christian is to want what God wants; for a cenobite, this is facilitated by the guidance of the abbot. The Master and Benedict were not the first monastic writers to use this text; they were preceded by Basil, *reg.* 80 and Cassian, *inst.* 5.14; *conf.* 16.6,4; 24.26,14; Sulpicius Severus, *dial.* 1.10.

Although this close association of cenobitic obedience with that of Christ can lead to a disregard for necessary human discernment, nonetheless it does serve to locate the subject on its proper ground. Here we are in the realm of faith, which not only seeks wisdom, but chooses to join Christ in the free gift of self for the life and salvation of others. Obedience is not so much a prudent strategy for salvation, but the conviction that one can only gain life by dying to self for others. See Holzherr, 101.

14.

After dropping another large chunk of RM 7 (52-66), Benedict concludes in a fashion similar to the Master. It is worth noting what has been omitted: RM 7.52-56: the cenobite need only obey and not worry any further about his fate at God's judgment; 57-66: monastic obedience as a form of martyrdom. No doubt Benedict drops the first section because it is morally dubious, and the second because it easily feeds into resentment. While RB 5 may appear to call for absolute, "militaristic" obedience without much concern for personal responsibility, this is a false impression. For his part, the abbot must conform to the high standards of RB 2 and 64. If he does not, there will be a conflict calling for discernment on the part of all members of the community. See Holzherr, 103–104.

fearfully, slowly, listlessly (trepide, tarde, tepide) is more obviously rhetorical in Latin than in our translation. In fact, RM 7.67 has only *trepide, tepide,* a clever play on words. These three adverbs sum up the chapter: obedience must flow from a generous heart. For the modern

sensibility, however, the harsh tone of some of the verses in this chapter may chill the heart more than warm it.

humanly attractive (dulcis hominibus) indicates that authority requires a great deal of human delicacy if it is to avoid wounding and hurting others. Superiors do not like to give difficult orders and subjects do not like to be treated roughly. Holzmann, 102, notes that while this chapter really discusses obedience in the one-to-one terms of a master-disciple relation, the term *dulcis hominibus* can have a communal dimension. It describes a situation where people are willing to listen to each other and respect the needs and feelings of the other person. Other monastic legislators such as Pachomius, *pr.* 30, connect obedience more tightly to communal love. Basil, *reg.* 71, makes the same point: "Whoever murmurs shall be alien to the community of brothers. He must be treated entirely like an alien."

murmuring (murmurio) is a key word in RB. See note 4.39 for its possible biblical background.

refusal (responso nolentis) obviously does not mean that one actually does not carry out the order, for the main verb says just the opposite. In this matter, Benedict is more demanding than Matthew 21:29, which commends the first son, who carries out the order after having refused to do so.

15.

to God (Deo). Here the supernatural foundation of the chapter is stated in its most categorical form. Yet the closer one creeps to a one-to-one equation between divine will and the human mediation of that will, the more one must surround such a principle with restrictions. Even the pope only claims to be infallible when speaking *ex cathedra* on matters of faith and morals.

Since Christ is the speaker in Luke 10:16, Benedict is not afraid to refer to him explicitly as "God," a thing the NT seldom does. In 5.15, Benedict has omitted from RM 7.68 *doctoribus* (to the doctors), a term loaded with meaning for the Master. In RM 1.82, abbots (teachers) are virtually equated with bishops, a claim Benedict wisely avoids. See *Index:* Christ, Teach.

16.

cheerful (hilarem) is the direct antithesis of the negative attributes listed in 5.14. The same can be said of *cum bono animo* (gladly) in this same verse. In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul tries to get the Corinthians to contribute to a collection for the Palestinian Christians, who are impoverished. He not only wants them to contribute, but he wants it

done with generosity and not reluctance. The famous saying "God loves a cheerful giver" does not just teach human generosity. It also means that because God loves us, he wants our love in return. This is the real Christian heart of RB 5. See Böckmann, 8.118; see *Index:* Joy.

17.
This rather awkward and overloaded sentence is a fitting climax to the chapter, since it stresses interiority. Monastic obedience is not mere mechanical compliance, but a free gift of the heart. If there is resistance at that level, the entire act is vitiated root and branch.

not only . . . but also (non solum . . . sed etiam). Since the usual understanding of murmuring is an outward act, we would expect this contrast to be the opposite: not only inward but outward. RM 7.71 complains of a disciple who reproaches the superior outwardly but *God* inwardly. It could be that Benedict expects some reflexive, outward complaining, but really only fears deep-seated resentment.

murmurs (murmuraverit) is future perfect in form, while its coordinate, *oboedit,* is present. This is because Latin conceives the murmuring to precede the obeying. The word *murmur* occurs four times in RB 5.14-19, making it a kind of *locus classicus* for the concept. Benedict sees a recalcitrant heart as inimical to the whole monastic enterprise. See *Index:* Murmur.

18.
the heart of the murmurer (cor . . . murmurantem), literally, "the murmuring heart," although, strictly speaking, *murmurantem* (m–f) cannot modify *cor* (n) (Lentini, 121).

19.
thanks (gratiam) does not seem to carry its precise theological meaning of unmerited divine benevolence. As a matter of fact, the ordinary Latin term simply means "favor," whether merited or not (OLD, s.v.). Benedict means that the murmuring heart forfeits the reward it deserves. See *Index:* Grace.

penalty of murmurers (poenam murmurantium) could refer to the dire punishments inflicted on the Israelites when they grumbled against God in the desert (see Num 16:41,49; 1 Cor 10:10; note 4.39), or it could refer to a well-known code of punishment used by monks. Yet this is the only place RB discusses the penalty against murmuring as such, and Benedict's frequent references to such a code does not mean that his Rule actually contains any such code. See notes on 2.22; 3.10. Lentini's suggestion (121) that public murmuring was penalized pub-

licly, and internal murmuring privately, evaporates upon closer inspection.

RB 5 Overview

RB 5 on obedience is a chapter that requires very close analysis. The immediate impression it makes on the modern reader is somewhat problematic, since it seems to call for absolute, unquestioning submission to an all-powerful authority. Recent history has illustrated well enough the abuses that can arise from such a system. On the other hand, thoughtful people today are aware that self-will is still at the heart of many human problems. Unless we are freed from the insatiable demands of our ego, we cannot make spiritual progress. Our task then is to look beneath the surface of RB 5 to see if it can be truly liberating for us. For an excellent analysis of this chapter and a synthesis of Benedict's teaching on obedience, see A. Böckmann, 8.109-130, which appeared after I had completed this Overview, but which corroborates my conclusions.

A. Literary History of the Chapter

According to Adalbert de Vogüé, 8.179-241, the ultimate source of the chapter is John Cassian. In many of his writings, Cassian discusses monastic obedience, and his ideas lie at the base of RM 7, which Benedict reworked to form RB 5. Especially in *inst.* 4, Cassian presents a program of radical obedience that demands instant, unquestioning compliance with every directive of the spiritual master. This includes the deliberate imposition of painful, even irrational obediences on the disciple, who gains a crown equivalent to martyrdom in conforming.

Perhaps the most important thing to notice in regard to this rather amazing doctrine is that it applies strictly to private, voluntary spiritual direction. The disciple purposely submits to a chosen master in order to attain to a goal of ego-reduction. In a sense, nothing else matters. There is little consideration of the possible abuses of authority, something that hardly occurred to ancient writers (Vogüé 8.197-199). Nor did Cassian pay much attention to the social consequences of such a theory, since he was fundamentally anchoritic in his outlook.

When the Master takes up this program, he must make some adjustments for he is arranging life in a cenobitic community. First, he creates a two-track system with "perfect" disciples bound to instant obedience while the less perfect are granted a degree of hesitation. Second, he twice quotes Luke 10:16, which implies that the abbot is the official, juridical mouthpiece of Christ, a claim Cassian never makes.

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Finally, the Master brings in John 6:38, which associates cenobitic obedience with the obedience and suffering of Christ himself. This is very helpful, for it places the whole discussion in the context of the gospel and not that of Stoicism or militarism.

As for Benedict, he makes use of RM 7, but in a free and creative fashion. Mostly, he drops elements that bloat the Master's text and render it idiosyncratic: 10-21 (perfect/imperfect obedience); 53-56 (freedom from personal responsibility); 22-66 (the broad way of the Sarabaites). In addition, Benedict drops many verses that will be repeated in the chapter on humility. Finally, RB 5.19 is a familiar and unfortunate (Vogüé, 8.211) addition by Benedict, threatening punishment for noncompliance.

One effect of Benedict's considerable reduction of the Master's chapter is to concentrate attention on the main theme: instant and wholehearted obedience. By eliminating some large sections that amount to excurses, Benedict has certainly achieved a tighter and more orderly treatise. Yet since the theme is so concentrated, there is something rather overwhelming and even crushing about Benedict's chapter on obedience.

B. Structural Insights

If we believe André Borias' contention that 5.1-10 is a literary unit created by the repetition of *gradus* in 1 and 10 (note 5.1 end), then we can say that this first section has as its theme alacrity in obedience. Most editors also divide the chapter into 11-13 and 14-19, which is reasonable since 11-13 is a virtual definition of cenobitic obedience, and 14-19 plays on the theme of wholehearted obedience.

This rough outline suggests that 1-10 and 14-19 exist in some parallelism. If that is the case, then we may have a progression from quick to glad obedience. That is a helpful direction, for it means that Benedict is not so much interested in efficiency as he is in basic spiritual attitudes. When he urges his monks to "obey with ready step" (5.8), no doubt he sees this symbolic of a deep commitment to the central monastic "sacrament" of obedience. Ultimately, the issue is love for God, which must inform all monastic practice (see note on 5.16). See Kardong, 9.

Aquinata Böckmann, 8.109-130, has analyzed RB 5 from the standpoint of literary structure and her conclusions are interesting. She thinks the material can be seen as a fairly elaborate chiasm, with an ABCDED'C'B'A' structure. In her schema, ABC/C'B'A' correspond to 5.1-10 and 14-19. Böckmann locates biblical passages at the center of each of these sections, which points up the importance of Scripture in

this chapter. As a matter of fact, the biblical passages are the very framework of this chapter and no mere appendage.

And what do these Bible quotes say? That obedience is rooted in listening to God (RB 5.5-6; Luke 10:16) and that the whole point of obedience is to return love to God, who loves us first (RB 5.16: 2 Cor 9:7). To combine these themes, obedience means listening to God so as to know how to respond in love to his will. RB 5 centers that response in obedience to the commands of authority, but the broader need is to discern the divine call in all the circumstances of our lives (see C2 below).

Scripture is also very crucial to the central unit (5.11-13). There the theme seems to be the narrow way of Christ, meaning not his hard teachings but the road of the Cross he himself trod before us. Inside of the biblical frame is encased a statement on cenobitic obedience (5.12) that applies the hard teaching of Christ's narrow way in a very practical and concrete fashion: The cenobite chooses to live under the authority of an abbot. Structually speaking, this is the core verse of this chapter.

This central verse contains two more elements that make it important for a proper interpretation of this chapter. First, it mentions the monastery as well as the abbot as the context of obedience, thus linking obedience to the communal life (see also note 5.14). Although the abbot is the chief mediator of God's will in the community, the monk must be open to divine truth from any member of the brotherhood (see mutual obedience in RB 71 and 72). Without this fundamental responsiveness to others, a vibrant community life is impossible. Since the basic source of RB 5 is the writing of Cassian, who is fundamentally anchoritic in orientation, this chapter needs to be filled out from the true cenobitic elements in the rest of RB. See C2 below.

Secondly, the theme of "desire" is highlighted in an interesting way. On the one hand, the monk obeys not his own inclinations and drives *(voluptatibus)* but he prefers *(desiderant)* to have an abbot over him. In other words, he puts aside his superficial wants and obeys his deeper need, namely, for the discernment of another. This way he finds a way out of the tragic loop of human selfishness and myopia. See notes on 5.13.

Despite the interesting results of Böckmann's structural analysis, one is left with a slightly uneasy feeling. Since Benedict has removed large blocs of material from the Master's treatise, why hasn't this disrupted the structure? Moreover, when elaborate chiasms are posited, one often has to use a good deal of imagination to see how certain parts actually mirror one another.

C. Further Notes on Obedience in RB from A. Böckmann

1. Obedience as Liberation

It is no exaggeration to say that obedience is the central theme for Benedict and a term for the monastic life itself. Prol 2–3 insists that the basic work of a monk is to return to God through obedience. This is described as an escape from sloth to do vigorous battle for Christ the Lord.

That alone might seem a rather vague program, but Benedict soon makes it quite specific. In RB 1.8-11, he describes a class of false monks called Sarabaites, whose chief downfall is precisely that they do not live under a Rule or an abbot. He says sarcastically, "Their law is what they like to do," meaning that they are their own guides. Historically speaking, there were certainly sincere and upright private monks and nuns who did not deserve this criticism. But as a general statement, it is a powerful warning against the most serious obstacle in any spiritual life, namely, the quest for mere personal fulfillment and satisfaction.

Perhaps the most unambiguous teaching against individualism stands in RB 72.7, where Benedict says: "No one is to pursue what he judges useful for himself, but instead, what he judges useful for someone else." This radical altruism comes straight from the New Testament, where Paul teaches it in Philippians 2:4. It is extremely demanding, not only because it goes against the grain of many human instincts, but also because it requires a pure heart to discern what others need without polluting the judgment with more self-interest. See note 5.7.

The cenobites, however, have help with this hard project. They have an abbot, who is believed in faith to represent the viewpoint of God and the community. The abbot's role is not just to coordinate life in the community, but also to aid the individual monk transcend the limits of self-interest and tunnel vision. A discrete reference to this task may be seen in RB 64.14, where the abbot is told to correct the monks in such a way as seems "expeditious" (etymologically: freeing).

Obviously, it is not always pleasant to be so liberated! The straitjacket of prejudice and obsession may seem more comfortable than the terrifying prospect of release. Yet the final result will be different: the joy that comes in being released from being the final architect of one's own life. In RB 49.8-9, for instance, monks are permitted to develop private plans for Lenten observance, but these must be cleared with the abbot (note 5.7). In RB 5.14-19, obedience is seen as a route from unhappiness (murmuring) to gladness. Perhaps this is the foundation upon which Benedict bases his claim in 71.1 that obedience is a *bonum* (good).

2. Obedience as Listening and Responding

In RB 5, obedience is presented as a process of listening to the call of God through the superior, followed by quick and wholehearted implementation. This paradigm is good and useful as far as it goes, but it must be considerably widened if it is to correspond to the actual realities of cenobitic life.

For one thing, a monk must pay attention to a good deal more than just the superior. First of all, there are all the members of the community, who must be honored with mutual obedience. Second, there is Scripture, which is the norm of norms for every Christian. Then there is personal conscience, which must be well-informed but never overridden. The voice of the teaching Church always has a claim on our obedience. Consequently, our listening must be polyvalent—aimed in all directions at once. See note for 5.12: *alieno judicio.*

Moreover, obedience is not a one-way street. The abbot must also listen, and listen carefully, to what the monks are saying. In fact, Benedict created two special and original chapters that make this point in no uncertain terms. RB 3 describes a community meeting, where every monk including the youngest is to have a hearing. And in RB 68, a monk is instructed on the proper way to carry on a dialogue with the abbot over the problem of a hard assignment. This chapter makes it clear that the alacrity demanded in RB 5 may have to give way to slow, painful discernment. See notes 5.7 and 5.13.

3. Obedience in Imitation of Christ

We have noted how the Master introduced several important biblical passages into Cassian's doctrine on obedience. Two of the six texts pertain directly to Christ, but from rather different angles. Luke 10:16, a text that is used twice (5.6,15) instructs the monk to obey the abbot as a delegate of Christ himself. The second passage, however, grounds obedience in the imitation of Christ's own obedience toward his Father (John 6:38; RB 5.13).

In a certain sense, Luke 10:16 could be seen to represent the anchoritic style of obedience, which involves a master and a disciple. In this system, one seeks out a holy, Christ-like guide as spiritual director and submits to him or her in obedience. Here the special gifts of the director were indispensable; if it becomes apparent that the master lacked discernment, then the disciple was free to leave and find a better guide. Of course, in Luke 10:16, Jesus' disciples are to be listened to because they are his chosen agents, not because they are particularly holy or insightful (note 5.6).

The perspective in John 6:38 is quite different. Now the object is God the Father, whereas Jesus is the model of human obedience. The monk

is to imitate Christ in such a way as to live out what he stood for. This does not mean wandering from town to town, or any other specific aspect of lifestyle, as much as patterning one's life on Christ's Cross in hope of sharing his resurrection.

This model seems to fit better with the concrete realities of life in community. Here it is not a matter of choosing a wise guru, but obeying whoever is elected abbot. What is more, cenobitic obedience is not a temporary ascetical exercise but a lifelong condition that never ceases to apply. The harsh consequences of cenobitic obedience receive concrete description in at least one place in Benedict's Rule. In RB 7.35-43, the fourth step of humility, the subject is obedience in very adverse circumstances. These are described as "difficult, unfavorable and even unjust," implying that some superiors can be expected to treat their subjects in wicked ways. This is not at all surprising, since superiors themselves are all sinners.

In the face of such treatment, the monk is to "embrace suffering with a quiet heart." This could suggest stoicism, but the real reference is Christ himself. His own example is the basis of the third step of humility, where Benedict quotes Philippians 2:8: "He became obedient even to death." In this way, a rather mundane and even sordid human situation is raised to a high level of spiritual significance by being directly associated with the salvific suffering of Christ.

It is one thing to be willing to suffer injustice nonviolently like Christ did, but the power to do so is another thing altogether. Where is the strength for such heroism to come from? The answer comes in RB 7.37: "We conquer through him who so greatly loved us" (Rom 8:37). This is a slightly veiled reference to Christ's death for our sake, which itself gives us the power to imitate that death.

This same theology of imitation is not restricted to RB 5 and 7. In fact, it is the real point of the famous saying of RB 4.21 and 72.11: Prefer nothing to Christ. This is in fact half of a quote from Cyprian (*Dom. orat.* 15), who adds "for he preferred nothing to us." This also implies the crucifixion, which empowers us to imitate his selflessness. No doubt this is the deepest level of monastic obedience and of all Christian life.

VI: DE TACITURNITATE

[1]Faciamus quod ait propheta: *Dixi: Custodiam vias meas, ut non delinquam in lingua mea. Posui ori meo custodiam. Obmutui et humiliatus sum et silui a bonis.* [2]Hic ostendit propheta, si a bonis eloquiis interdum propter taciturnitatem debet taceri, quanto magis a malis verbis propter poenam peccati debet cessari. [3]Ergo, quamvis de bonis et sanctis et aedifi-

is to imitate Christ in such a way as to live out what he stood for. This does not mean wandering from town to town, or any other specific aspect of lifestyle, as much as patterning one's life on Christ's Cross in hope of sharing his resurrection.

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cationum eloquiis, perfectis discipulis propter taciturnitatis gravitatem rara loquendi concedatur licentia, [4]quia scriptum est: *In multiloquio non effugies peccatum,* [5]et alibi: *Mors et vita in manibus linguae.* [6]Nam loqui et docere magistrum condecet, tacere et audire discipulum convenit.

[7]Et ideo, si qua requirenda sunt a priore, cum omni humilitate et subiectione reverentiae requirantur. [8]Scurrilitates vero vel verba otiosa et risum moventia aeterna clausura in omnibus locis damnamus et ad talia eloquia discipulum aperire os non permittimus.

RB 6: ON SILENCE

1. Let us do what the Prophet says: "I said: 'I will guard my ways so as not to sin with my tongue. I placed a guard at my mouth. I was speechless and humiliated, refraining even from good speech.'" 2. Here the Prophet shows that if we sometimes ought to refrain from speaking good words on account of the intrinsic value of silence, so much the more ought we stop speaking evil words out of fear that it will be punished as sin. 3. Therefore, due to the great importance of silence itself, perfect disciples should rarely be granted permission to speak, even good, holy and edifying words. 4. For it is written: "In much speaking, you will not avoid sin." 5. And elsewhere, "Death and life are in the hands of the tongue." 6. It is the master's role to speak and teach; the disciple is to keep silent and listen. 7. Therefore, if one must ask something from the superior, let it be done with great humility and reverent submission. 8. As for crude jokes and idle talk aimed at arousing laughter, we put an absolute clamp on them in all places. We do not permit the disciple to so much as open his mouth for such talk.

RB 6 Notes

T

On Silence (De taciturnitate). This title is probably adapted from RM 8T. For the Master, *taciturnitas* is the preferred term for silence, while *silentium* is used but rarely. To judge from OLD, the two words mean essentially the same thing, although it has been suggested that RM/RB give them a slightly different twist (see note 6.3). In some languages such as Italian (Lentini, 124) "taciturn" is a pejorative term. Perhaps we can also say that *silentium* refers more to physical silence, while *taciturnitas* refers to the human quality of being quiet.

1.

Let us do (Faciamus) seems an abrupt way to start, which is understandable since Benedict only picks up RM 8 at v. 31. By so doing, he

spares his readers a strange, dark treatise on anthropology (RM 8.1-30), teaching that the mouth must be clamped shut to prevent the evil thoughts of the heart from issuing forth.

I placed a guard at my mouth (Posui ori meo custodiam). In Psalm 39:1-2, the psalmist's control over his tongue is only temporary, for he bursts out in v. 4. Moreover, this is not presented as a moral failure by the Hebrew authors, for whom free speech with God was prized and honored, e.g., Job, Gideon, Jeremiah. Neither should Benedict be seen as the absolute enemy of speech (see RB 42,49) but of evil and excessive talk. In addition, RM/RB have omitted a line from the psalm which indicates the author's silence is precisely in the presence of the enemy, and thus a refusal to engage in polemics.

from good speech (a bonis) seems remote from the thought of the psalmist, whose point is that he has held his tongue "to no avail" (RSV). Thus what the Vulgate renders as "good things" has no basis in the Hebrew original. The argument of RM 8.31-32 is *a fortiori:* if he refrained from good speech, how much more from bad!

guard (custodiam) for the Master (8.21-23) is literally the teeth clenched to block evil speech. The same idea occurs with *clausura* (barricade) in RM 9.51/RB 6.8.

refraining from . . . speech (silui). According to Manning, 34, this is actually Benedict's preferred term for silence, since he uses it whenever he is not under the influence of the Master, i.e., RB 38.5; 42.1; 48.5 and 52.2.

2.

As it stands, the grammar of the sentence is irregular, with finite verbs used in an indirect statement where there should be infinitives. Lentini thinks the "if clause" begins a new sentence. If the grammar of the original (RM 8.32) was faulty, it is still a carefully worked out sentence, featuring an elaborate, balanced symmetry.

sometimes (interdum) qualifies the possible impression given by v. 1 that one should always be silent (Lentini, 125). In fact, Benedict is no proponent of mutism, as many texts of RB show. He knows it is unnatural for human beings to shun all speech; what is important is that speech be modest and "reasonable" (7.56-60; 31.7; 61.4; 66.2-4; 68). By and large, the ancient monastic Rules restricted speech at certain times such as meals and at night (see Basil, *reg.* 136; Pachomius, *pr.* 31,33-34; 66; 116; RB 38.5; 42). See Holzherr, 106. See *Index:* Reason, Speech.

on account of the intrinsic value of silence (propter taciturnitatem). "Intrinsic value" or some such term (most translations have "love") must be understood here, for "silence" alone makes no sense. If Wathen,

7.103-106, is right that *taciturnitas* refers more to silence as a value than to mere absence of physical sound, then this translation is warranted. The argument for "love" is its symmetry with "fear," but the latter is also implied. To say that *taciturnitas* refers to the "value" of silence does not deny that Benedict is calling for the practice of silence (*pace, RB 1980,* 190, note).

3.

perfect (perfectis). While the general theme of the chapter is the suppression of evil speech, this verse has to do with positive talk. In RM 8–9 (esp. 9.1-10,42,46-47), the distinction is carried further by restricting "perfect" disciples in speech even more than imperfect ones. Apparently for the Master spiritual progress does not bring with it freedom. In the NT, however, Christians are urged to speak to God with *parrhesia,* the guileless freedom of children with their parents (e.g., Acts 9:27). For the Master, perfection merely brings with it responsibility for added ascesis. This is consonant with the essentially pragmatic, moralistic mind of the Master. As is shown by RM 8.34, the "perfect" disciple does not speak until the abbot asks him a question, and even then not at once. At any rate, Benedict has eliminated this distinction everywhere else in his Rule but here. To translate *perfectis* as "mature" *(RB 1980),* simply compounds the problem and necessitates the introduction of "even for" as a modifier of *perfectis,* which gives exactly the wrong meaning. As a matter of fact, RB 6 is a rather unsuccessful abridgement of RM 8–9, and even though RB 6.3 improves the grammar of the Master, it garbles his train of thought (Vogüé, 4.251-252). See *Index:* Perfection.

It is no accident that the term *discipulus* only occurs in RB where Benedict is copying the Master. In its ascetical form (master-disciple), it is really not part of Benedict's monastic philosophy. Biblical discipleship is another matter altogether. See Rengsdorf, 414–461; see *Index:* Disciple.

4.

The biblical texts quoted in this and the next verse seem to corroborate the need for silence, but this attestation should not be exaggerated. For one thing, they come from a sage, whose role as teacher required speaking. Secondly, *Proverbs* certainly does not teach any radical ethic of silence as does the Master, respectable moderation being the basic tone of the Wisdom literature. For some reason, RM/RB do not quote James 3:6-12, one of the most powerful texts on speech in all of Scripture.

much speaking (multiloquio) is the enemy of learning and true discipleship, for then one will miss the teaching of the master (6.6). While

RM 8.31-37 sees loquacity as sin, RM 9.32-40 presents it as an impediment to learning.

5.
hands (manibus) means "power," but then the concrete image is lost. The tongue, of course, has no hands, but the Master often entangles himself in such mixed metaphors. In fact, RM 8–9 are loaded with elaborate, and sometimes bewildering, metaphors, almost all of which Benedict has jettisoned.

6.
role (condecet) sounds very much like the expression of a well-tested maxim flowing from a whole body of experience or perhaps the master-disciple system. The verse is lifted bodily from Augustine, *serm.* 211.6, where it refers to a very different situation. The bishop is telling his hearers to put aside their quarrels. The listeners are not openly contradicting him because one does not do that in a homily: "In this place, it is my role to speak and yours to listen in silence." Yet Augustine suspects they are muttering in their hearts. None of this has much to do with master-disciple relations, nor does it posit a permanent one-way learning dynamic as RM 8.37 does. The same maxim is used rather differently by Benedict in 3.6, where he converts it into a demand for justice and wisdom on the part of the abbot (see note 3.6). Note too that RB 6 is written under heavy influence of RM, but RB 3 is not.

listen (audire) is not a throwaway word here, for listening is precisely why the disciple is silent before the teacher. Even though the word only appears this once in RB 6, it can be said to be the real node of monastic silence.

The Master presents the abbot as a kind of inextinguishable fount of wisdom, in the presence of whom monks are to listen and not to speak. On the other hand, RM 9.43-45 shows that the monks were free to speak, at least about holy things, when the abbot was absent. This picture of the abbot as a garrulous guru is not necessarily representative of the authentic desert tradition, where some of the greatest masters were quite reticent, e.g., Arsenius in *verba sen.* 5.2.3. In this verse, Benedict comes closest to adopting the master-disciple system, but his abbot is no paragon of eloquence (see RB 38.9). See *Index:* Master, Speech, Teach.

7.
superior (priore) refers to the chief official and not the "lieutenant" described in RB 65. Because the "second" is today called "prior" (where there is an abbot), this may be confusing, but *prior* always means the

"first" in RB (see *RB 1980,* 191). Benedict's "second" is called *praepositus*. See *Index:* Prior.

with reverent submission (cum subjectione reverentiae) means that one does not importune a superior, but approaches as a suppliant ready to accept whatever answer is given. No doubt this is an epexegetical genitive, for reverence and submission are mutually explanatory. Furthermore, RB normally uses *reverentia* to denote worship and adoration of God; hence it is a powerful word when used of human relations. See Kardong, 23.200-201; see *Index:* Reverence. For the Master, *reverentia* means silence before a question of the abbot (7.18), but for Benedict it means the direct opposite of contentiousness (see RB 3.4). Thus for RM it is a matter of manners, but in RB it is a deep attitude toward authority (Vogüé, 4.255-256). Benedict summarizes in this one sentence the enormous casuistry of RM 9.1-50, which permits only an imperfect disciple to ask twice for leave to speak after having been refused. The perfect disciple must never ask twice!

8.

crude jokes (scurrilitates). According to OLD, the abstract noun is based on *scurra,* a rough fellow who loitered about the streets telling tasteless jokes. Of all the translators, only Rochais and *RB 1980* pick up on this dimension, yet it must be admitted that RB 49.7 weakens my case, for it wants the monks to simply cut back on *scurrilitates* for Lent. If this really meant dirty jokes, the legislator would not have been so gentle. The English word usually connotes obscenity.

laughter (risum) may also have a flavor of ribaldry, given the fact that much ancient comedy was obscene. This may be part of the reason why Benedict is so opposed to laughter, a thing we take for granted as a sign of a balanced and healthy personality. See Geisel, 28–34; see *Index:* Laughter.

There is a notable lack of prepositions in this verse: both *risum* and *aeterna clausura* need *ad* to be more intelligible.

we put an absolute clamp (aeterna clausura . . . damnamus). Our vivid translation is based on the fact that the Latin itself is very colorful: "We condemn to a complete barricade." This is a direct quote from RM, which develops an elaborate anthropology in which the teeth clamp down to block off illicit speech from escaping from the mouth. Some translators (Steidle, Salzburg, Holzherr) emphasize the temporal element *(aeterna)* to create a nice pair with *omnibus locis:* always and everywhere. Actually, Benedict has added *omnibus locis,* perhaps to show he does not want this kind of talk anywhere, even behind the clenched teeth or in the heart (Vogüé, 4.257).

RB 6 Overview

RB 6 on silence is a very short treatise on an important monastic topic. Readers who expect material on the relationship of silence to prayer or mysticism will be disappointed, since the approach is almost entirely geared to the avoidance of bad speech. Since Benedict has heavily remodeled a considerable amount of material from the Rule of the Master on this topic, we can get some idea of the particular emphasis of RB by comparing the two. But the main task will be to flesh out the scanty chapter of Benedict by other comments on silence and speech from the rest of RB.

A. Literary History

1. The Rule of the Master

Our basis for this part is the extensive analysis of A. de Vogüé found in 4.227-281 of his large commentary. In that study, he spends most of his time describing RM 8–9, two huge chapters in which the Master develops in great detail an anthropology and a casuistry of the practice of silence in the monastery. In order to see what Benedict has omitted from this material, we need to provide at least a simple summary of the Master's doctrine.

According to RM 8, the human heart is the seat of the spiritual life, and this heart is connected to the outside world by means of the eyes and the mouth. Although the Master does not pursue the topic of the eyes to any extent, he does note that one takes in images and information from the world by that means. As for the mouth, it is seen as the organ of expression for the thoughts of the heart. Since some of these thoughts are evil, they must not be given expression, but blocked by means of the teeth in the closed mouth. Thus, silence from evil words. But good words must also be denied expression, a proposition the Master "proves" by the use of Psalm 39:2-3 and other Wisdom sayings.

This same teaching is repeated in RM 9.32-40, but here the stress is on the prevention of *much* talk rather than evil talk. Now the point is made more clearly than in RM 8, for much talk is said to prevent the disciple from listening to the teaching of the master. Here we enter the world of master-disciple relations, which is not so much biblical as a system built on the Origenist spirituality of third-century Alexandria.

In RM 9, the Master elaborates a long and tedious casuistry of how disciples are to go about requesting permission to speak. This simple matter is made very complicated by the introduction of various distinctions: perfect and imperfect disciples; holy and secular talk; and the presence or absence of the abbot. As a general rule, the Master lays

down the surprising principle that the more perfect the disciple, the less permission to speak.

Even though the Master seems to have thought through this subject to the last detail, in fact he is by no means consistent on the matter of silence. In some texts, such as RM 10.45 and 11.41-43, he appears to impose absolute silence on his monks. In 9.42-45, however, he indicates that holy subjects can be discussed in the absence of the abbot. And of course he encourages the monk to ask the abbot questions and vice versa. In fact, an overall reading of RM leaves the impression that it was not a very silent monastery, but a kind of floating seminar of pious discourse between the master and his disciples.

According to Vogüé, the ultimate source of this doctrine is Cassian's teaching on humility in *inst.* 4.39. In that treatise, obedience and taciturnity are presented as elements in what constitutes true humility. And all three virtues are meant to regulate master-disciple relations. In terms of logical order, one must listen in silence to know what the master teaches; then only can one put the teaching into practice by obedience. This is a fairly simple ascetical system, but the Master unnecessarily complicates it by introducing all manner of distinctions into the material on taciturnity.

2. The Rule of Benedict

Benedict cuts through a good deal of this excrescence by simply dropping large sections of RM 8–9. In fact, he has reduced about a hundred verses to just eight. He does this by jettisoning the entire section on the anthropology of silence (RM 8.1-30) and also by eliminating most of the distinctions made by the Master in the casuistry of RM 9. By and large, Benedict does not distinguish between perfect and imperfect disciples; holy and secular words; the presence or absence of the abbot.

Yet his editing of this material is not flawless. For example, RB 6.3 still speaks of "perfect" disciples and says they should speak least of all. Since most commentators have not known about the background in RM 9, this verse has confused them and caused them to fudge their translations (see note 6.3). RB 6.8 retains the curious term *clausura,* which causes no translation problems but still looks strange. In fact, it is a tiny remnant of the Master's odd anthropological language.

It is not true, however, to say that Benedict merely abridges RM 8–9. He has in fact made a few original contributions that are worth at least a brief mention. In RB 6.7, he adds an original verse which speaks of the "reverent submission" a disciple should make to his master. A study of Benedict's overall use of *reverentia* indicates that the word refers to a profound submission of spirit, whereas the Master uses the same word

to mean the mere protocol of silence before the master (see note 6.7). And Benedict adds *omnibus locis* (in all places) in 6.8, which may be a subtle corrective to the idea of suppressing bad talk (see note 6.8).

Nevertheless, it is hard to be convinced that RB 6 is a very satisfactory chapter on silence. It may be that Benedict has done well to reduce the Master's bloated and awkward material, but the problems with the source remain in the abridgement. Silence is simply too rich a topic to be reduced to the kind of ascetical treatment we are given here.

B. A More Complete Doctrine of Silence

When we cast our net more widely in RB, however, we find some insight into the deeper aspects of silence. Böckmann, 4, has made a careful survey of this material and we will make use of her findings in this section. The first point she makes is that silence and speech are inseparable, and both of them are included in the term *taciturnitas*. According to A. Wathen, 8.196-211, this word connotes more than purely physical silence. Basically, it refers to a person who is sufficiently serene and wise so that his words arise out of silence and his silence itself speaks eloquently. The truly taciturn person will not use words to mask his inner emptiness, nor will he maintain a dumb silence when a good word is needed. Although neither the Master nor Benedict quote them, there are important teachings on silence from the desert tradition. The Desert Fathers have left us sayings that indicate that they sought the silence of the desert precisely as an atmosphere where the soul could find the quiet needed for deep communion with God. This comes through clearly in this statement of Cassian (*inst.* 10.3): "He can attain the goal of his calling, namely, the pure vision of God, overriding all things, only in silence, in patient endurance in his cell and in meditation of Scripture." Thus in one deft stroke, Cassian links silence, stability and contemplation.

Moreover, Cassian, *conf.* 9.15, teaches that prayer itself tends toward wordlessness. Since God is basically ineffable, true experience of God transcends words and even frustrates them. Hence as prayer deepens, words will tend to become more and more superfluous. Perhaps this is implied in Benedict's remark that "prayer should be short and pure" (20.4). Ultimately, "much talk" (6.4) is the enemy of the spiritual life.

As we have suggested in note 6.8, Böckmann agrees that the atmosphere in which Benedict wrote was rather raucous and uncouth. Not only were monks too eager to talk; they were given to rough humor that needed to be checked. Ribaldry is a sign of an uncivilized person, but it is also symptomatic of an undisciplined sensuality. Freud thought that explosive laughter at obscene jokes is caused by neces-

sarily repressed sexuality; therefore, it is a healthy outlet. The monastic legislators do not agree. For them, uproarious laughter is no solution to the problem, for no peace can come through vulgarity.

As we have said, Benedict has other passages on silence outside of RB 6. One important section occurs in 4.51-54, a series of aphorisms on good and bad speech. A notable term here is "love," for the monk is warned not to love chattering and laughing. Talk and laughter are not bad in themselves, but to plunge into them is damaging. Conversely, one should "love" silence and not merely endure it, for as Cassian taught, until you love something it is not really a virtue.

Another passage where silence and speech are the focus lies in RB 7.56-61, steps 9 through 11 of the ladder of humility. A word that sticks out here is *rationabilia* (7.60), which has replaced *sancta* in the text of the Master. This is an important clue to the mentality of the two writers, for "reasonable" and "holy" are really very different ideas. For the Master, the only words worth speaking are pious ones. Consequently, he attempts to fill the day of the monk with them, even legislating public Bible reading during outdoor work (RM 50.28-33; see Kardong, 25.99-100). Benedict certainly has nothing against pious talk, but he seems more interested that the talk of the monks be "reasonable." What does this mean?

A good example is seen in RB 31.7, where the cellarer is taught how to handle disagreeable requests from the brethren. Even if the request is positively inflammatory *(irrationabiliter),* the cellarer is to give a calm, decent response. He is not to rebuke the offender with a pious ferverino; what is needed here is a firm, peaceful (taciturn) response rather than evil for evil. Obviously, monks in sensitive jobs must know how to speak in such a way as to promote an atmosphere of love. To show how much Benedict prizes good speech in a monk, consider this sentence, also concerning the cellarer: "If goods are not available to meet a request, he will offer a kind word in reply" (31.13). See Kardong, 5.28-44.

Of course, the abbot is the monastic official who must know best how to give a good word. In his case, it is important to know how to speak to each individual of the community. In a large community with a wide variety of personalities, this is no small order. Nonetheless, the abbot must tailor his words to the case, "some by encouragement, some by rebuke, some by convincing argument." We are a long way here from the desert master who needs to deal with only a few disciples, which is the probable context of RM 8–9/RB 6.

Another monastic official who must know how to speak, and speak well, is the porter. In his case, it is not any impressive spiritual discourse that it called for, but rather a welcoming word for the weary traveler

or the needy poor. "Then, with all the gentleness that comes from the fear of God, he provides a prompt answer with the warmth of love" (RB 66.4) It is hard to think of a verse that better summarizes Benedict's theory of speech: the proper word for the proper moment.

In summing up her study of speech in the Rule of Benedict, Böckmann makes the interesting observation that by far the most prominent speaker in the document is not even the abbot, but the Holy Scripture. Unlike the Master, he does not want the Bible read aloud at all times and places, but he does want life permeated with the spirit of Scripture. That will insure that speech be harnassed to the promotion of love and not its opposite.

There are, of course, times and places where silence is more important. One of these times is Lent, when the monk is asked to observe more silence than otherwise: "During these days, therefore, we will add to the usual measure of our service . . . let each one deny himself some food, drink, sleep, needless talking and idle jesting" (49.7). The word for needless talking is *loquacitas,* which is a good antonym for *taciturnitas*. But it might be added here that sometimes there is a word that is needed but not given. In our time, many men (more than women!) maintain a kind of mute silence that amounts to a refusal or inability to speak a healing word. This mutism undermines marriages and it can also poison monastic life.

In the monastery, there are places as well as times where silence is necessary. Thus in RB 38.5, Benedict demands silence in the refectory and the purpose is to hear the table reading that must always take place there. Since this reading must have been heavily biblical, this silence is not mere discipline, but reverent attentiveness to God's very word (see note 6.7; this Overview, A). It is instructive to compare the dining room of the Master, where questions are permitted and even encouraged about the reading (RM 24).

Another special place of silence is the oratory. RB 52 is a nice little treatise on the need for quiet there so that whoever wishes can pray in an atmosphere of peace and serenity. Yet Benedict adds a shrewd remark that the one praying should also take care not to do so in a loud voice, for that would disturb others. No doubt these warnings would be more necessary in the oral culture of the sixth century, but it is still true in our time that some people are more interested in their own convenience than in that of others.

Many more texts of RB could be adduced to show other facets of silence and speech. We have seen that these can be used to enrich the few jejune verses of RB 6. Still, even when we have done this, we cannot say that Benedict plumbs the depths of the subject in the manner of the great spiritual writers. This is a simple consequence of the genre

of the Rule: it is a practical manual of monastic conduct and not a spiritual treatise. We must look elsewhere for the profounder depths of this very important facet of monastic spirituality.

VII: DE HUMILITATE

[1]Clamat nobis scriptura divina, fratres, dicens: *Omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur et qui se humiliat exaltabitur.* [2]Cum haec ergo dicit, ostendit nobis omnem exaltationem genus esse superbiae. [3]Quod se cavere propheta indicat dicens: *Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum neque elati sunt oculi mei, neque ambulavi in magnis neque in mirabilibus super me.* [4]Sed quid *si non humiliter sentiebam, si exaltavi animam meam?—sicut ablactatum super matrem suam, ita retribues in animam meam.*

[5]Unde, fratres, si summae humilitatis volumus culmen attingere et ad exaltationem illam caelestem ad quam per praesentis vitae humilitatem ascenditur volumus velociter pervenire, [6]actibus nostris ascendentibus scala illa erigenda est quae in somnio Iacob apparuit, *per quam* ei *descendentes et ascendentes angeli* monstrabantur. [7]Non aliud sine dubio descensus ille et ascensus a nobis intellegitur nisi exaltatione descendere et humilitate ascendere. [8]Scala vero ipsa erecta nostra est vita in saeculo, quae humiliato corde a Domino erigatur ad caelum. [9]Latera enim eius scalae dicimus nostrum esse corpus et animam, in qua latera diversos gradus humilitatis vel disciplinae evocatio divina ascendendo inseruit.

[10]Primus itaque humilitatis gradus est si, *timorem Dei sibi ante oculos* semper ponens, oblivionem omnino fugiat [11]et semper sit memor omnia quae praecepit Deus, ut qualiter et contemnentes Deum gehenna de peccatis incendat et vita aeterna quae timentibus Deum praeparata est animo suo semper evolvat. [12]Et custodiens se omni hora a peccatis et vitiis, id est cogitationum, linguae, manuum, pedum vel voluntatis propriae sed et desideria carnis, [13]aestimet se homo de caelis a Deo semper respici omni hora et facta sua omni loco ab aspectu divinitatis videri et ab angelis omni hora renuntiari.

[14]Demonstrans nobis hoc propheta, cum in cogitationibus nostris ita Deum semper praesentem ostendit dicens: *Scrutans corda et renes Deus;* [15]et item: *Dominus novit cogitationes hominum;* [16]et item dicit: *Intellexisti cogitationes meas a longe;* [17]et: *Quia cogitatio hominis confitebitur tibi.* [18]Nam ut sollicitus sit circa cogitationes suas perversas, dicat semper utilis frater in corde suo: *Tunc ero immaculatus coram eo* si *observavero me ab iniquitate mea.*

[19]Voluntatem vero propriam ita facere prohibemur cum dicit scriptura nobis: *Et a voluntatibus tuis avertere.* [20]Et item rogamus Deum in

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oratione ut *fiat* illius *voluntas in* nobis. [21]Docemur ergo merito nostram non facere voluntatem cum cavemus illud quod dicit sancta scriptura: *Sunt viae quae putantur ab hominibus rectae, quarum finis usque ad profundum inferni demergit,* [22]et cum item pavemus illud quod de neglegentibus dictum est: *Corrupti sunt et abominabiles facti sunt in voluntatibus suis.*

[23]In desideriis vero carnis ita nobis Deum credamus semper esse praeentem cum dicit propheta Domino: *Ante te est omne desiderium meum.* [24]Cavendum ergo ideo malum desiderium quia mors secus introitum delectationis posita est. [25]Unde scriptura praecepit dicens: *Post concupiscentias tuas non eas.*

[26]Ergo si *oculi Domini speculantur bonos et malos* [27]et *Dominus de caelo semper respicit super filios hominum, ut videat si est intellegens aut requirens Deum,* [28]et si ab angelis nobis deputatis cotidie die noctuque Domino factorum nostrorum opera nuntiantur, [29]cavendum est ergo omni hora, fratres, sicut dicit in psalmo propheta, ne nos *declinantes* in malo et *inutiles factos* aliqua hora aspiciat Deus [30]et, parcendo nobis in hoc tempore quia pius est et exspectat nos converti in melius, ne dicat nobis in futuro: *Haec fecisti et tacui.*

[31]Secundus humilitatis gradus est si propriam quis non amans voluntatem desideria sua non delectetur implere, [32]sed vocem illam Domini factis imitetur dicentis: *Non veni facere voluntatem meam, sed eius qui me misit.* [33]Item dicit scriptura: Voluntas habet poenam et necessitas parit coronam.

[34]Tertius humilitatis gradus est ut quis pro Dei amore omni oboedientia se subdat maiori, imitans Dominum, de quo dicit apostolus: *Factus oboediens usque ad mortem.*

[35]Quartus humilitatis gradus est si, in ipsa oboedientia duris et contrariis rebus vel etiam quibuslibet irrogatis iniuriis, tacite conscientia patientiam amplectatur [36]et sustinens non lassescat vel discedat, dicente scriptura: *Qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit;* [37]item: *Confortetur cor tuum et sustine Dominum.* [38]Et ostendens fidelem pro Domino universa etiam contraria sustinere debere, dicit ex persona sufferentium: *Propter te morte afficimur tota die, aestimati sumus ut oves occisionis.* [39]Et securi de spe retributionis divinae subsequuntur gaudentes et dicentes: *Sed in his omnibus superamus propter eum qui dilexit nos.* [40]Et item alio loco scriptura: *Probasti nos, Deus, igne nos examinasti sicut igne examinatur argentum; induxisti nos in laqueum; posuisti tribulationes in dorso nostro.* [41]Et ut ostendat sub priore debere nos esse, subsequitur dicens: *Imposuisti homines super capita nostra.* [42]Sed et praeceptum Domini in adversis et iniuriis per patientiam adimplentes, qui *percussi in maxillam praebent et aliam, auferenti tunicam dimittunt et pallium, angariati miliario vadunt duo,* [43]cum Paulo apostolo *falsos fratres* sustinent et *persecutionem sustinent* et *maledicentes* se *benedicent.*

[44]Quintus humilitatis gradus est si omnes cogitationes malas cordi suo advenientes vel mala a se absconse commissa per humilem confessionem abbatem non celaverit suum. [45]Hortans nos de hac re scriptura dicens: *Revela ad Dominum viam tuam et spera in eum.* [46]Et item dicit: *Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus, quoniam in saeculum misericordia eius.* [47]Et item propheta: *Delictum meum cognitum tibi feci et iniustitias meas non operui.* [48]*Dixi: Pronuntiabo adversum me iniustitias meas Domino, et tu remisisti impietatem cordis mei.*

[49]Sextus humilitatis gradus est si omni vilitate vel extremitate contentus sit monachus, et ad omnia quae sibi iniunguntur velut operarium malum se iudicet et indignum, [50]dicens sibi cum propheta: *Ad nihilum redactus sum et nescivi; ut iumentum factus sum apud te et ego semper tecum.*

[51]Septimus humilitatis gradus est si omnibus se inferiorem et viliorem non solum sua lingua pronuntiet, sed etiam intimo cordis credat affectu, [52]humilians se et dicens cum propheta: *Ego autem sum vermis et non homo, opprobrium hominum et abiectio plebis.* [53]*Exaltatus sum et humiliatus et confusus.* [54]Et item: *Bonum mihi quod humiliasti me, ut discam mandata tua.*

[55]Octavus humilitatis gradus est si nihil agat monachus, nisi quod communis monasterii regula vel maiorum cohortantur exempla.

[56]Nonus humilitatis gradus est si linguam ad loquendum prohibeat monachus et, taciturnitatem habens, usque ad interrogationem non loquatur, [57]monstrante scriptura quia *in multiloquio non effugitur peccatum,* [58]et quia *vir linguosus non dirigitur super terram.*

[59]Decimus humilitatis gradus est si non sit facilis ac promptus in risu, quia scriptum est: *Stultus in risu exaltat vocem suam.*

[60]Undecimus humilitatis gradus est si, cum loquitur monachus, leniter et sine risu, humiliter cum gravitate vel pauca verba et rationabilia loquatur, et non sit clamosus in voce, [61]sicut scriptum est: *Sapiens verbis innotescit paucis.*

[62]Duodecimus humilitatis gradus est si non solum corde monachus sed etiam ipso corpore humilitatem videntibus se semper indicet, [63]id est in opere Dei, in oratorio, in monasterio, in horto, in via, in agro vel ubicumque sedens, ambulans vel stans, inclinato sit semper capite, defixis in terram aspectibus, [64]reum se omni hora de peccatis suis aestimans iam se tremendo iudicio repraesentari aestimet, [65]dicens sibi in corde semper illud quod publicanus ille evangelicus fixis in terram oculis dixit: *Domine, non sum dignus, ego peccator, levare oculos meos ad caelos.* [66]Et item cum propheta: *Incurvatus sum et humiliatus sum usquequaque.*

[67]Ergo, his omnibus humilitatis gradibus ascensis, monachus mox *ad caritatem* Dei perveniet illam quae *perfecta foris mittit timorem,* [68]per

quam universa quae prius non sine formidine observabat absque ullo labore velut naturaliter ex consuetudine incipiet custodire, [69]non iam timore gehennae, sed amore Christi et consuetudine ipsa bona et delectatione virtutum. [70]Quae Dominus iam in operarium suum mundum a vitiis et peccatis Spiritu Sancto dignabitur demonstrare.

RB 7: ON HUMILITY

1. Brothers, the Holy Scripture cries out to us, saying: *Whoever is self-promoting will be humbled, and whoever is humble will be promoted.* 2. When it says this, it shows us that all self-promotion is a kind of pride. 3. The Prophet shows that he avoids this when he says: *Lord, my heart is not lifted up, nor are my eyes fixed on the heights. I have not mixed myself in great affairs nor in things too wonderful for me.* 4. But what *if my thoughts are not humble? What if I rise up in pride? Then you will refuse me like a mother does a weaned child.*

5. So, brothers, if we wish to arrive at the pinnacle of humility and if we wish to attain speedily to the heavenly height to which one climbs by humility in this present life, 6. then by our ascending acts we must set up that ladder which appeared to Jacob in a dream. It showed him *angels descending and ascending*. 7. Doubtless, we should understand this descent and ascent as follows: one descends by pride and ascends by humility. 8. The towering ladder is, of course, our earthly life. When the heart is humble, God raises it up to heaven. 9. We could say that our body and soul are the sides of this ladder, into which the divine summons has inserted various rungs of humility and discipline for the ascent.

10. Thus the first step of humility is to utterly flee forgetfulness by keeping the fear of God always before one's eyes. 11. We must constantly recall the commmandments of God, continually mulling over how hell burns the sinners who despise God, and eternal life is prepared for those who fear God. 12. We should guard ourselves at all times from sins and vices, that is, of thoughts, tongue, hands, feet or self-will, but also desires of the flesh.

13. Let each one take into account that he is constantly observed by God from heaven and our deeds everywhere lie open to the divine gaze and are reported by the angels at every hour. 14. The Prophet demonstrates this to us when he shows that God is always privy to our thoughts: *God examines hearts and minds.* 15. Likewise, *The Lord knows human thoughts.* 16. And again, *You have known my thoughts from afar.* 17. Human thoughts will be made plain to you. 18. So, then, to be careful about his bad thoughts, the faithful brother should say in his heart: *I will be blameless before him if I restrain myself from my evil.*

19. As for self-will, we are forbidden to carry it out, for Scripture says to us: *Beware of your own desires.* And so we ask God in prayer that his will be accomplished in us. 21. Thus it is with good reason that we learn to steer clear of our own will, for we dread the warning of Holy Scripture: *There are paths that seem straight to us, but ultimately they plunge into the depths of hell.* 22. We also find frightening what is said to the careless: *They are decadent and have become abominable through following their desires.*

23. We should be convinced that our lower inclinations are well known to God, for the Prophet says to God: *All my desire is before you.* 24. Thus it is imperative that we beware of evil desire, for death lurks near the gateway of pleasure. 25. That is why Scripture commands: *Do not pursue your lusts.*

26. Therefore, if *the eyes of the Lord survey the good and the bad,* 27. and *the Lord constantly looks down from heaven on the human race to see if there is anyone with the wisdom to seek God,* 28. and if the angels assigned to us report our deeds to the Lord daily, even day and night, 29. then, brothers, we must continually make sure, as the psalmist says, that God never sees us *falling* into evil and becoming *useless people.* 30. Because he is merciful, he may spare us now and hope we change for the better, but eventually he will say, *You did these things and I was silent.*

31. The second step of humility is not to delight in satisfying our desires out of love for our own way. 32. Rather, we should pattern our behavior on that saying of the Lord: *I have not come to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.* 33. Scripture also says: *Self-will brings punishment [on itself] but obedience to duty merits a reward.*

34. The third step of humility is to submit to the superior in all obedience for love of God. In this, we imitate the Lord, of whom the Apostle says: *He became obedient to the point of death.*

35. The fourth step of humility is this: when obedience involves harsh, hostile things or even injustice of some sort, one embraces them patiently with no outcry. 36. Let us bear such things without flagging or fleeing, as Scripture says: *Whoever perseveres to the end will be saved.* 37. Likewise, *Let your heart be strengthened and endure the trials of the Lord.* 38. To show that the faithful person ought to endure all adversities for the Lord's sake, the Prophet says on behalf of the suffering: *All day long we are put to death on your account; we are considered as sheep for the slaughter.* 39. But they are so hopeful of divine vindication that they joyfully stay their course, saying: *In all these things we triumph because of him who loved us.* 40. And in another place Scripture says something similar: *You have tried us, O God; you have tested us with fire, as silver is tested. You have led us into a trap. You have loaded our backs with trouble.* 41. And to show that we ought to be under a superior, it goes on to say:

You have placed people over our heads. 42. Moreover, those who maintain patience in the face of setbacks and injustices fulfill the command of the Lord: *When they are slapped on the cheek, they present the other one as well. When someone takes their shirt, they give up their coat as well. Pressed into service for one mile, they go two.* 43. Like the Apostle Paul, they endure with *disloyal brothers and persecution; they bless those who curse them.*

44. The fifth step consists in revealing through humble confession to one's abbot all evil thoughts that enter the heart, as well as the evils secretly committed. 45. Scripture urges us on in this matter when it says: *Make plain your way to the Lord, and hope in him.* 46. It also says: *Confess to the Lord, for he is good. His mercy is forever.* 47. The Prophet says further: *I have made my sin known to you and not hidden my injustices.* 48. I said: *I will accuse myself to the Lord of my injustices. And you forgave the sin of my heart.*

49. The sixth step occurs when a monk is content with low and dishonorable treatment. And regarding all that is commanded him, he thinks of himself as a bad and worthless worker, 50. saying with the Prophet: *I was reduced to impotence and ignorance; I was like a brute beast before you, and I am also with you.*

51. The seventh step of humility is surmounted if the monk not only confesses with his tongue, but also believes with all his heart that he is lower and less honorable than all the rest. 52. He thus abases himself, declaring with the Prophet: *I, though, am a worm, not a man. I am the object of curses and rejection.* 53. *I was raised up, but now I am humiliated and covered with confusion.* 54. Along the same line: *It is good for me that you humiliate me, so that I might learn your commandments.*

55. The eighth step of humility is when a monk does nothing except what is encouraged by the common rule of the monastery and the example of the veteran members of the community.

56. The ninth step of humility comes when a monk holds back his tongue from speaking, and out of love for silence does not speak until someone asks him a question. 57. Scripture shows that *In much talk, one does not escape sin,* 58. and: *The chatterbox does not walk straight on the earth.*

59. The tenth step of humility consists in not being quick to laugh at the slightest provocation, for it is written: *The fool raises his voice in laughter.*

60. The eleventh step of humility is that when a monk speaks at all, he does so gently and without laughter, humbly and seriously, with few and careful words. 61. And let him not be given to shouting, as it stands written: *The wise man is known by his reticence.*

62. The twelfth step of humility is achieved when a monk's humility is not only in his heart, but is apparent in his very body to those who see him. 63. That is, whether he is at the Work of God, in the oratory, in the monastery, in the garden, on a journey, in the field or anywhere

at all, whether sitting, walking or standing, let his head always be bowed and his gaze be fixed on the earth. 64. Constantly aware of his guilt for sins, he should consider himself to be already standing before the terrifying judgment of God. 65. He should always repeat in his heart what the publican said in the gospel, his eyes cast downward: *Lord, I am a sinner and not worthy to raise my eyes to heaven.* 66. And also with the Prophet: *I am bowed down and totally humbled.*

67. Therefore, when he has climbed all these steps of humility, the monk will soon arrive at that *perfect love of God which drives out fear.* 68. Due to this love, he can now begin to accomplish effortlessly, as if spontaneously, everything that he previously did out of fear. 69. He will do this no longer out of fear of hell but out of love for Christ, good habit itself and a delight in virtue. 70. Once his worker has been cleansed of vices and sins, the Lord will graciously make all this shine forth in him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

RB 7 Notes

1.

humbled . . . humble (humiliabitur . . . se humiliat). Although "humble" and "humbled" seem to be merely the active and passive sides of the same virtue, they are not. "Humbled" is pejorative, and could be rendered "humiliated," but "humble" is usually a positive idea. Latin *humiliare* has both possible meanings (Blaise, s.v.) as does *tapeinos* of the Greek original of Luke 14:11 and 18:14. This same distinction is made by K. Wengst in the title of his provocative book *Humility*.

Since Luke uses the same saying in two different passages, and it also occurs in Matthew 23:12, it is probably a detached logion and may have been uttered by Jesus himself. The theme in the NT is the divine reversal of human arrangements, whereas the monks emphasize the element of human self-abasement. This chapter is closely copied from RM 10, the earlier model of which is Cassian, *inst.* 4.39. Cassian begins with Proverbs 9:10, not with Luke 14:11. Indeed, RM 10 and RB 7 can be seen as a commentary on the Lucan logion. See *Index:* Humility.

cries out (clamat) is a vigorous verb, reminiscent of Lady Wisdom crying out in the streets and summoning adherents in Proverbs 8–9. As in RB Prol 8ff., (see notes) the tone here is exhortatory and highly personal (*fratres,* direct address). The personal, encouraging tone of RB 7.1-4 is reminiscent of Prol 1–4. In fact, some scholars think both the Prologue and RB 7 are from a single ascetical document of Lérins called *Actus militiae cordis,* Holzherr, 119, but Vogüé denies this. The

personification of Scripture as one crying out shows that these writers make little or no distinction between the person of God and the divinely inspired text. RB 7 is saturated with biblical texts, many of which are introduced with "Scripture says" (7.1,19,21,25,33,36,40,45,57).

2.
self-promotion (exaltationem) is literally a raising of the self. Here, the meaning is moral and psychological: the persons are vaunting themselves and not waiting humbly for God's action.

pride (superbia). Curiously, this, the mother of all vices, is mentioned only once in a very lengthy discussion of humility. This may serve as a clue that RB 7 is by no means restricted to a narrow discussion of humility. One monastic writer who made much of the workings of pride was Bernard, who actually created a parallel ladder of pride in his *Liber graduum humilitatis et superbiae*. Moreover, Bernard attempted to create a clear logical progression of the degrees of pride. See *Index:* Pride.

3.
fixed on the heights (elati) literally means "lifted up," and so it stands in parallel with the preceding verb *(exaltatum).* But in modern usage, the proud person has his eye on high things that can enhance his reputation. Another possibility is the haughty, arrogant eye spoken of by the Salzburg translator. The eyes are one of the most expressive human faculties. See *Index:* Eye.

4.
Then you will refuse me as a mother does a weaned child (Sicut ablatatum super matrem suam, ita retribues in animam meam). The thought here is obscure because Benedict, copying RB 10.4, uses the psalm to mean the opposite of the original intent of the author. Originally, the weaned child was a metaphor for contentment, but now it is a symbol of frustration. The key word is *retribues,* which Benedict understands negatively. But *retributio* in the psalm is positive. It should be added, however, that the Old Latin Bible used by the Master already has Psalm 130:2a in the negative, so it is easy to see how the monastic authors were led astray (Lentini, 132).

5.
culmen (pinnacle) and *pervenire* (climbs) also appear in RB 73.9, where the point is somewhat different. Here in RB 7, one ascends to the spiritual height by humility; in the epilogue, the ascent is made by heeding the writings of the spiritual masters, as well as Scripture. In both passages, the ascent spirituality of the Alexandrian school (see

Clement, *strom.* 2.134.2-3) is in the background, mediated through Cassian. The latter writes in *conf.* 18.5: "Si igitur ad culmen virtutum eius volumus pervenire." In the Latin West, Augustine teaches the same spirituality of ascent. See Kardong, 7.233-252; E. Bertaud, 62–86. Although the ladder image does not come from Cassian, an early Egyptian monastic text that does use it for ascetical purposes is *lib. Hors.* 21–22. See *Index:* Heights.

heavenly (caelestem). The idea that the steps of humility lead to heaven is greatly expanded in RM 10.92-122, a graphically physical description of heaven. In 7.67-70, Benedict will omit that section of RM 10 and revert back to Cassian's idea in *inst.* 4.39 that the ladder leads to love. In general, Benedict is more concerned with spiritual life in the here and now, whereas RM thinks more in eschatological categories.

6.

ascending and descending (descendentes et ascendentes). The paradoxical image indicates the subtle nature of humility. Humility cannot be a technique for attaining the heights, for that would vitiate the whole enterprise. In fact, Christian humility is really not a human achievement at all, but rather a willingness to let God work through our weakness. Thus, the "ascending acts" of 7.6 must be understood very carefully, and this whole chapter should not be seen as self-salvation. See *Index:* Ascent.

Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:12 was a favorite image of early monastic writers: Basil, *in Ps.* 1; Cassiodorus, *in Ps.* 119; Jerome, *ep.* 98.3. Yet the passage of Genesis differs in some basic ways from RM/RB: (1) the ladder does not reach to "heaven" in our sense, since there is no hope for the afterlife in Genesis; (2) the "angels" on the ladder are a euphemism for God, not human beings struggling for salvation. Accord-ing to Lentini, 134, it was Augustine who first interpreted Genesis 28:12 in a spiritual-ascetical sense (*in Ps.* 19:119, PL 36.67). Thus even though RM/RB think this is the obvious meaning of Jacob's Ladder *(non aliud sine dubio . . . nisi),* it is in fact only so to the patristic mentality of the fourth through sixth centuries.

7.

pride (exaltatione) is the exact counterpart of *humilitate,* so it is clear that it is a synonym of *superbia.* See *Index:* Pride.

8.

when the heart is humble (humiliato corde) could be rendered "when the heart is humiliated," but that is not the point. Also, strictly speaking, the ladder itself is raised to heaven by God, presumably with the

humble monk on it. Since this seems an awkward idea, in our translation we have made the heart itself the object of God's mercy. Benedict has shortened the convoluted image of RM 10.8: "With heart and head made humble in this, its present time, it lifts up to heaven to its last end, death, exalted by the Lord." The effect of this condensation is to downplay the physical and eschatological aspects of the Master's statement (Vogüé, 2.475). See *Index:* Heart.

9.

dicimus (we could say) replaces the much stronger *certissime credimus* (we most certainly believe) of RM 10.9. Perhaps Benedict is not as impressed with the Master's image as he might be. Like most images, it begins to limp when detailed, point-for-point correlations are attempted. Still, the Master is making a good point, and one which he will sustain later, especially in step twelve: The body itself must share in our humility. Today we might prefer to talk about the incarnation of values, or the importance of body language. At any rate, beneath the Master's clumsy metaphor is a soundly holistic approach to spirituality. See *Index:* Body.

for the ascent (ascendendo) is a change from *ascendendos* of RM 10.9, which would mean the steps "to be ascended." The difference is not very significant.

Cassian, *inst.* 11.10 has the same idea and language: *Per . . . humilitatis gradus est . . . culmen ascenderet* (It is . . . by the steps of humility . . . one attains to the summit). A similar phrase is found in *conf.* 14.2. Indeed, Cassian's entire spirituality is studded with ascent-language. See *Index:* Ascent.

rungs (gradus) are necessary for the Master's construction of this ladder, but there are other kinds of ascenders. For example, the author of Genesis may have been thinking of a Babylonian ziggurat, a common Near Eastern structure. See *Index:* Step.

summons (evocatio) could refer to the voice of v. 1, or perhaps to Genesis 28:12 or Scripture in general. Nowhere, though, does Scripture compare the rungs of a ladder to the spiritual life. Moreover, it sounds awkward in English to say that the "summons inserts" the rungs.

humility and discipline (humilitatis vel disciplinae) could be taken as an attempt to express both the interior and exterior aspects of the question, and therefore a parallel to "body and soul" found earlier in the verse. As a matter of fact, few of the rungs are about humility, strictly taken (probably 5-7), and one step, namely, 12, is quite external in its concern. Since RB 7 never speaks of the deliberate humiliation of a monk, *disciplina* can hardly mean "punishment." See *Index:* Discipline.

10.

to . . . flee (si . . . fugiat). The conditional clause is grammatically anomalous, since it is not subordinate. Benedict falls into this syntactical trap by eliminating *discipulus*, the subject of the Master's sentence. This is but one of many instances where Benedict deletes *discipulus*, presumably because he does not wish to promote the master/disciple mentality. Benedict also eliminates *caeli* (heavenly) from the ladder of the Master, thus reducing the heavy eschatology of the latter. See *Index:* Disciple, Heaven.

fear of God (timorem Dei). The Master has made "fear of God" into step one, although Cassian treats it as a preliminary condition. RM/RB have twelve steps instead of Cassian's ten signs, having incorporated "fear of God" into the mainstream, as it were. What is more, step twelve (esp. RB 7.64) repeats the same theme as a powerful inclusion, which tends to undermine the claim (7.67) that the ladder leads from fear to love. In fact, "fear" here is really reverence for God, which is obviously not a rudimentary spiritual condition. What is more, the twenty verses (7.10-30) devoted to this theme show it is not at all marginal in the author's mind. See *Index:* Fear.

step (gradus) is an innovation by the Master (10.10), replacing Cassian's *indices* (sign). It is a significant shift, for *gradus* implies a progression, while *index* does not. Moreover, *gradus* seems to suggest humility as a purposeful spiritual program, but *index* could be something that one receives, or at least experiences, without causing it to happen. On the other hand, *index* refers to concrete experience, a cornerstone of Cassian's spiritual system (see Kardong, 14.82-105); *gradus* need not have an empirical dimension. In RB 5.1 (see note), it seems that Benedict has used *primus gradus* in a different sense.

This first step is reminiscent of one section of RB 4, The Instruments of Good Works: v. 11 = RB 4.45; v. 12 = RB 4.48; v. 13 = 4.49 (Holzherr, 124). See *Index:* Step.

before one's eyes (ante oculos). The image is based on Psalm 36:2, where the wicked is depicted as someone who puts the thought of God behind one's back, as it were, and so convinces himself, at least for the moment, of one's immunity from divine judgment.

always (semper) appears no less than four times in RB 7.10-12, giving the theme of the fear of God a high degree of seriousness and insistence. RM/RB may have learned this from St. Basil, whose Rule is especially marked by religious awe and solemnity (Lentini, 136). The atmosphere of these verses could be described as the spiritual core of

the entire RB (see Kardong, 4.84-86). Borias, 14.321ff., points out the unusual amount of repetition in these verses, which creates a heavy, didactic tone. He also notes that the same themes, probably borrowed by the Master from Basil, are repeated in RB 4.44-63; 7.10-14; 7.26-30; 19.1-3. Such repetition must indicate that memory/fear of the Lord is one of the central spiritual pillars of the Rule.

forgetfulness (oblivionem) is the opposite of the mindfulness and remembrance insisted on in the next verse. The positive idea *(memor)* is a favorite theme of Benedict. All monastic officials are to be especially *aware* of their obligations. But the mindfulness of the monk is primarily toward God; indeed, the entire monastic regime is calculated to combat distraction from its central focus. Hence the strictures of Benedict against drunkeness (40.5-7), gossip (43.8-9) and ribaldry (6.8, see note). Basil, *reg.* 2, has a wonderful description of "practical atheism," a life as if God did not exist (summarized in Holzherr, 122–123). See *Index:* Forgetting.

11.

The sentence is syntactically irregular, but the sense is clear enough. In order to produce a balanced English translation, I have read "hell" and "eternal life" as parallel, although grammatically they are not. By changing *Dominum* of RM 10.11 to *Deum*, perhaps to avoid a possible reference to Christ as the eternal judge, (see Borias, 7.421-423), Benedict has *Deus* three times in this sentence alone.

12.

This curious list is copied faithfully from the Master, who repeats it in RM 8.24-37 with elaborate development. Lists of sins attached to various human faculties were a commonplace in patristic literature: Methodius, *conviv.* 5; Chrysostom, *de stat. hom*. 3.4; Pelagius, *ep. ad Demet*. 12; Dorotheus, *doc. div*. 15.165 (Vogüé, 2.476). Lentini, 138, mentions the curious omission of the eyes. An interesting connection between this first step and Christology is given in the same sermon by Cassian (*inst.* 4.34-35): "Our cross is the fear of the Lord. Whoever is crucified can no longer move his limbs as he pleases and wander in all directions" (Holzherr, 123).

desires of the flesh (desideria carnis) is in the accusative case, whereas the other words in the series are genitive. The so-called interpolated mss add *amputare festinet* (let him quickly eradicate [the desires of the flesh]), which fits well, but seems too easy a solution. Benedict also combines self-will and desire in 4.59-60; 5.12; 7.31. See *Index:* Desire.

13.

Vogüé, 4.307, points out that these verses of RM/RB are couched in vocabulary very reminiscent of Basil's Rule: divine presence and gaze, *reg.* 46; 66; 79; God examines hearts and minds, *reg.* 34; 79; 108; avoid all sins, *reg.* 34,46,60,66,79; perpetual vigilance, *reg.* 2; 55; 57; 58. Along with Lentini, 139, we connect 7.13 to what follows, not to what precedes. Besides a close syntactical connection *(demonstrans hoc),* vv. 14-18 explain v. 13.

constantly (semper . . . omni hora). So intent is the author on driving home the point that there is no vacation from God, that he repeats the adverb.

14.

mind (renes) but literally the kidneys. The combination "heart and kidneys" is a Hebraism for the inmost part of the person.

privy (praesentem). The point is not that we are always thinking of God, but that God is always thinking of us. What is more, God knows our thoughts. The concept of keeping the interior life pure out of fear of the Lord was an ancient one for the monks. In *vit. Anton.* 6, Athanasius makes this point very clearly (Holzherr, 124).

thoughts (cogitationes). This feature of human spirituality was important to the early monks, especially those of the East (see note 4.50). The word occurs no less than five times in 7.14-18, a series of biblical quotes no doubt chosen for that very reason. See *Index:* Thought.

15.

Psalm 93:11 continues, "that (human thoughts) are but a breath" (RSV). Since the psalmist is warning evildoers that they cannot escape God's scrutiny and vengeance, the meaning seems to be not that human thoughts are fleeting, but that they are weak.

17.

be made plain (confitebitur). Psalm 76:11 says "The wrath of man will praise thee," meaning ironically that God worries so little about human wrath that God wraps it around him like a robe. Here, however, another sense of *confiteri* is meant: to make sin or evil plain to God (Lentini, 140).

18.

heart (corde) is a very common term in this chapter, occurring eleven times: RB 7.3,8,14,18,37,48,51,62(bis),65. It always refers to the spiritual center of the person, and so is synonymous with mind or soul, but not the physical muscle that pumps blood. Since "heart" is a Hebraism,

and this chapter is thick with citations from the Jewish Bible, it is natural that it should bulk large here. See *Index:* Heart.

faithful (utilis) does not have a secular meaning here. Blaise (s.v.) has "faithful to his vocation," which looks in the right direction, but may overspecify. At any rate, monks must be "useful" first to God, and thereby to themselves and those around them. The word was so surprising to some of the scribes that they changed *utilis* to *humilis* (Lentini, 140). See *Index:* Useful.

his . . . my (suas . . . mea). The abundance of reflexive adjectives probably goes back to the Latin text of Psalm 17:23. If we take it literally, it could mean that one is aware of one's personal obsessions and weaknesses, especially of thought *(cogitationes suas perversas),* and resolves to keep them under control *(observavero me).* To judge from the RSV, Hebrew Psalm 17:24 makes no such point: "I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from guilt."

19.

At this point, Benedict eliminates RM 10.20-28, which discusses sins of the tongue, hands and feet. Since the discussion is somewhat awkward and forced, this change may be judged an improvement. Now Benedict picks up the Master's commentary on v. 12 and explains "self-will."

self-will (voluntatem . . . propriam) means the human drive for autonomy from every outside authority, including God. The monastic solution to the trap of self-will is obedience to a divinely authorized human agent, namely, the abbot. RB 5 is devoted to the topic, and RB 7 also has much to say about obedience, which undergirds steps two through five of humility. See *Index:* Will.

your desires (voluntatibus tuis). In Sirach 18:30, the reference is to gross appetites, as is shown by the next verse, which warns that debauchery can lay someone open to the ridicule of his enemies. In the Rule, the slant is different. The problem now is not so much the sensuality of the weak as the determination of the strong and virtuous, which can be a more profound spiritual problem than sins of the flesh. Because "desire" is such an important term in RB, one hesitates to replace it with "schemes," but that is what is meant. Few monks think of their plans and projects that way, but unless they are transparent to authority, they really are schemes. See *Index:* Will.

20.

prayer (oratione). Although *dominica* (Lord's) is dropped from the

text of RM, the reference is obviously to the Our Father (Matt 6:10), a text that the Master commented on extensively in the Thp section of his Prologue. Benedict does not transmit that commentary. Again in this verse, *Deum* replaces *Dominum*. In RM 10.31, one prays to the Lord with the Lord's prayer! In the verses that follow, there are many allusions to St. Cyprian's commentary on the Lord's Prayer *(domin. orat.).*

his will (illius voluntas). Theologically speaking, our only purpose on earth is to realize God's will. Likewise, the great danger of self-will is that it block or thwart God's will in the world. See *Index:* Will.

21.

"Steer clear," literally, "Do not do." This verse introduces two basic scriptural reasons for distrusting our own will: (1) we are prisoners of our own illusions; (2) we are driven by primitive needs and hungers we may not ourselves understand.

seem . . . straight (putantur . . . rectae). In a sense, people always choose what seems best to them at the moment. Unfortunately, when their judgment is clouded, they often choose evil. The only sure defense against this kind of misjudgment is to rely on the authority or counsel of others for guidance.

plunge into the depths of hell (ad profundum inferni demergit) is more colorful language than Proverbs 16:25, which merely speaks of illusion leading to death. The depths of hell are a favorite theme of the Master (RM Thp 51; 7.40; 10.27,32,46; 90.7), which Benedict generally avoids, but he uses it in 72.1, an important statement on evil zeal.

22.

desires (voluntatibus) here must mean the primitive drives of the human animal, which, if left unchecked, can make a slave out of a person. This interpretation seems mandatory, given the additional clues "negligent," "corrupt" and the discussion of bodily desires which immediately follows. Lentini, 142, thinks the ms variant *voluptatibus* is correct. Psalm 14:1, however, seems to be more worried about crafty plotters than about sensual decadence. See *Index:* Desire.

23.

Psalm 38:10 is making a very different point than RM/RB. The original situation is one of personal calamity or sickness in which the singer thrusts his sighs *(desiderium)* and tears *(gemitus)* before God for recognition. In the ascetic-monastic texts, *desiderium* is taken to mean bodily passion, and the claim now is that none of this is hidden from God. See *Index:* Desire.

well known (praesentem). As in v. 14, the literal meaning is that God is present to our inmost secrets. The English idiom is the reverse of the Latin: we are transparent to God.

base desires (desideria . . . carnis), literally, "desires of the flesh," but the reference is really not to materiality but to misplaced desires. Just as with NT *sarx,* Latin *carnis* can mean that which opposes God. Consequently, *desideria carnis* virtually refers to the capital sins or vices. See *Index:* Desire.

24.

evil desire (desiderium malum). Obviously, no one could deny the need to avoid evil desire, but we should recall the general claim here (and in RB 5) that *all* human desire bears within it the seeds of corruption. See *Index:* Desire.

pleasure (delectatio) is slightly different from *desiderium,* being the delight that follows the attainment of desire. Hence this quote from *pass. Seb.* 14, an early Christian popular tract, does not really bolster the author's argument, except that it belongs to the same ascetical milieu.

thus (ergo) replaces *vero* of RM 10.35, giving v. 24 a somewhat different relation to its predecessor. Rather than being confirmatory, it is now a logical conclusion to what precedes. That is why I have interpreted *desideria carnis* (7.23) as clearly pejorative.

25.

lusts (concupiscentias). The first half of Sirach 18:30 is given here, and the second half was quoted in 7.19. Although I argued there (see note) that *voluntas* no longer has the sensuous meaning it had in Sirach, I do not doubt that *concupiscentia* retains its hedonistic meaning. Sirach conveys the wisdom of the worldly sage that dissipation can lead to physical destruction, but most OT writers do not worry about these bourgeois problems. See *Index:* Desire.

27.

wisdom (intellegens). The context of Psalm 14:2 is the sharp difference between the fool and the wise person. Psalm 14:1, which was partially cited in RB 7.22, defines the fool as one who pretends that God is not alert and so he can do as he pleases. Now Benedict insists that God misses nothing and so the wise act accordingly. In Gregory the Great's *dial.* II.2, Benedict lives "alone under the gaze of God," and this statement occurs shortly after he has conquered lust and resumed his "quest for God." His renunciation of self-will makes him spiritually attractive to other people (Holzherr, 126). See *Index:* Wisdom.

to seek God (requirens Deum). Although the Latin of RM/RB has the disjunctive *aut* (or) between *intellegens* and *requirens Deum,* they are parallel in the Hebrew psalm. In my translation I imply that true spiritual wisdom *is* to "seek God." "To seek God" *(Deum quaerere)* is one of the chief requirements of a Benedictine novice (see 58.7). The context of 7.27 suggests that this phrase does not so much refer to the pursuit of something elusive, but the acknowledgment of someone (God) who is all-pervasive. See *Index:* Seek.

28.

the angels assigned to us (angelis nobis deputatis). The biblical role of angels is to convey revelation to humanity, and also to protect us. Here, though, the task is different: to act as agents of surveillance. This adds to the rather menacing tone on which the first step ends, reminding us that the theme is, after all, the fear of the Lord.

our deeds (factorum nostrorum opera) can be read as either a pleonasm or a genitive of inherence (the works of our deeds). Excessive as it is, it fits well in a part of the Rule where repetition and superabundance of verbiage are rife.

daily, even night and day (cottidie, die noctuque). As if daily were not often enough, the writer (or an interpolator) adds "day and night." It is only one variation of many on "always" in step one. See notes 7.10 and 7.13.

we must make sure (cavendum). This strong verb is repeated thrice in this section: 7.21,24,29. Since we are dealing with the All-Powerful Holy One, it behooves us to maintain a respectful, alert reverence and awe, never slipping into a state of carelessness. The monastic regimen itself is meant to promote such an atmosphere, and anything that introduces distraction and dissipation is alien to it.

eventually (in futuro). Benedict has removed the more precise term *judicio* (the judgment) from RM 10.41. The term will reappear in step twelve, and add to the strong bond or frame that exists between the first and last degrees. This tends to undermine the claim made by many commentators that the steps are a *progression* from fear to love.

spare (parcendo) repeats the notion in Prol 36–38 that the present time is kindly provided us by God for our amendment. To waste it in foolish distraction is to lack fear of the Lord.

You did these things and I was silent (Haec fecisti et tacui). This quiet, laconic psalm verse (50:20) is a surprising, and effective, ending to a rather flamboyant, bombastic section. Said at the judgment, it is crushing.

31.

This verse speaks of both the drive for power *(voluntas)* and the pull of our appetites *(desideria).* Most translators balance the material into two independent members, but in fact the statement on self-will is in a subordinate participial construction. Thus, it seems preferable to make this the motivation of the lust for pleasure. Whether or not this is to overinterpret, psychology tells us that what appears to be hedonism is often a desire for control. See *Index:* Desire.

Cassian's first sign *(index),* which is the basis of the second step of RM/RB, is as follows: "First of all, if a man has all his desires mortified." RM/RB christianize this rather stoical saying by adding the example of Jesus (John 6:38). Benedict drops the words "the disciple ascends (the second step of humility) on the heavenly ladder" from the formula of the Master, as he will do at each of the twelve steps. Besides shortening this very long chapter a bit, the omission downplays the ladder image and also the master-disciple theme of RM. See *Index:* Disciple.

32.

pattern our behavior (factis imitetur), literally, "imitate by our deeds." To our logic, one can only imitate words with words, but perhaps this is putting too fine an edge on things. At any rate, Jesus' deeds were fully consonant with his words. The primacy of deeds is a major theme of RB. See *Index:* Action.

my own will (voluntatem meam). In *reg.* 12, Basil maintains that one who sets out to do God's will must inevitably thwart his own. He bases this opinion on John 6:38, which is also cited by Cassian (*conf.* 16.6) on behalf of obedience. Following RM, Benedict cites John 6:38 both here and in RB 5.13 (see note on that verse).

33.

Scripture (scriptura). Benedict complacently follows RM 10.44 in calling this text biblical, but in fact it is not. Rather, it is a commonplace proverb which occurs in several early Christian popular tracts, e.g., *act. Anas.* 17. It is noteworthy that *voluptas* sometimes replaces *voluntas* in these proverbs. As is clear from the context, the issue in the tracts is the forced actions of persecuted Christians: What they are forced to do against their conscience, far from bringing guilt, is meritorious. RM/RB use the saying to make a more subtle point: What we freely decide to do may well be blameworthy, but when we act out of true duty, we are never culpable.

obedience to duty (necessitas) cannot mean involuntary action forced on us by an outside agent, for this cannot be meritorious. Rather, the term must refer to free obedience.

merits (parit), literally, "gives birth to."

34.

For step three, the Master skips Cassian's second *index* and goes to the third: "If he puts no trust in his own opinion but all in the judgment of his superior and listens eagerly and willingly to his directions." The Master expands the saying into a long, repetitious catena of biblical quotes (10.45-51), which Vogüé calls "incoherent." Benedict returns to Cassian's economy. As Lentini alertly notes, 148, the teaching in RM/RB represents a shift from Cassian, for he is talking about free adherence to a spiritual master, but they are speaking of the vowed, permanent obedience of the cenobite to whomever happens to be his superior. 7.34 is the first verse in the chapter that pertains specifically to monks. Obedience to the will of God is incumbent on everyone, but only cenobitic monks systematically pursue that will through obedience to a human superior.

for the love of God (pro Dei amore). Benedict adds these words to the Master's third step, perhaps to make sure the reader understands that monastic life has nothing to do with power politics. Since RB 7.67 claims the ladder of humility leads from fear to love, it is illogical to introduce love at this early stage. Yet the addition is welcome, for the Bible never says that love only comes into play at a high level of ascetical achievement. In fact, without love, there can be no hope for monastic obedience "unto death." But human love for God is itself impotent unless it is based on God's love for us. RB 68.5 and 71.4 also speak of obedience out of love. See *Index:* Love.

He became obedient (Factus obediens). The earlier monastic writers also use this capital text from Paul: Basil, *reg*. 59; 65; 83; 126; 131; Cassian, *inst.* 12.28; 19.26.

35.

The Cassianic root of the fourth step is the fourth sign (*inst*. 4.39): "If he maintains in everything obedience and gentleness and constant patience." The Master has vastly enlarged a rather vague and innocuous prescription, and Benedict only slightly alters RM. Besides expanding Cassian's dictum, RM/RB have applied it to a particularly difficult aspect of cenobitic obedience, namely, the case where authority acts unjustly toward the monk. For the anchorite, there is no intrinsic problem, at least in theory: one simply finds a new spiritual guide. But the cenobite has no such option. He must endure to the end . . . but how?

injuries (injuriis). Although English "injury" does not imply injustice, the Latin term *injuria* does. Five of the six meanings given in OLD

include the element of injustice, and in fact the roots of the two words are the same (IUS). Steidle and Lentini do not interpret the term that way, but most other commentators do. It is not implied that the superior is intending injustice toward the monk; the case is seen from the standpoint of the monk who feels grievously wronged. The qualifying adjective *quibuslibet* (of some kind) seems to take some of the bite out of *injuriis,* but it should be recalled that the Master rarely if ever admits the abbot could be wrong. On the other hand, mutual obedience to monastic equals can bring the same hardships. See *Index:* Injury.

harsh (duris) turns up three times in RB 2, with reference to characters that only respond to rough lessons (2.12,25,28). In 58.8, the novice is not to be shielded from the harsh and rough things that will surely befall every monk, not to say every human being. As long as we are sinners, we will suffer such things and inflict them, too.

embraces them patiently with no outcry (tacite conscientia patientiam amplectatur). A more literal translation might be: "One embraces patience quietly in the heart." The syntax here is very difficult, which is not surprising, seeing that the same few words of Cassian have been so thoroughly rearranged.

embraces (amplectatur) has a definite active thrust: one is not simply a *victim,* but actively participates in the suffering. Clearly, it is a heroic stance, or better, a religious one, for what else could give meaning to such a situation?

patiently (patientiam) is a key word here, and it appears in many important passages of RB. Besides its intrinsic quality of endurance over time, which makes it valuable in lifelong cenobitic community, patience has a connection to "suffering" *(patior).* For a Christian, of course, the suffering of Christ is the root of all virtue. See *Index:* Patience.

with no outcry (tacite conscientia) is obscure and demands careful interpretation. *Tacitus* refers to physical silence, at least according to OLD. But Benedict has inserted *conscientia* into the text of RM, perhaps to say that this silence must extend to the interior. Or has Benedict simply replaced Cassian's *constantia* (perseverance) with a similar term? In *conf*. 16.26, Cassian uses much the same vocabulary to discuss the problem of what to do when one is offended or wronged by a friend: The great thing is to not lose *tranquillity*. But that word never appears in RB 7.35, and personal peace is probably not the point. On the other hand, the translation "with a silent heart" can be expanded into a grotesque spirituality whereby the monk is even able to believe in his heart that injustice done to him is not unjust. Besides feeding into all

sorts of mental and emotional disorder, such a teaching opens the door to institutional arrogance. "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Acton). Yet this does not tell us how a monk *should* react to personal injustice. At least 7.35 seems to counsel nonviolence, but it does not speak of courageous resistance to evil, which may be just as necessary. See *Index:* Conscience, Silence.

conscientia. Borias, 16.27-37, notes that Benedict has replaced the Master's *discipulus* as the subject of the sentence (see note 7.10). Borias points to the many minute vocabulary changes made by Benedict as a sign that RB 7 really is a watershed chapter. From here onward, Benedict is much readier to impose his own spiritual vision on the Master's material, or to replace it with his own. Borias also makes the intriguing proposal that Benedict has changed the Master's term *constantiam* to *conscientia* because he wishes to avoid the terminology of martyrdom. Likewise, he does not call the monk a "martyr" as does RM 7.59. Holzherr, 128, on the other hand, thinks Benedict does present the monk as martyr. See *Index:* Conscience, Disciple.

36.

flee (discedat) probably refers to an exit from monastic life, a danger which is discussed in Prol 48 (see note). Yet it could apply to the conflict with authority, and be taken as encouragement not to give up the battle too easily. In the monastic life, one is bound to obey the abbot, but not in evil. Of course, things rarely come to that. In ordinary circumstances, the issue is often truth as much as justice. No one can ask a monk to call black what he sincerely believes to be white, for that is to violate his integrity. For the desert writers, the question of "staying put" was seen mostly in individual, ascetical terms: one was not to flee the cell in order to seek distractions which would ease the interior struggle (see *vit. patr.*, 5.7.32; Holzherr, 128–129).

bear up under (sustine). This is the usual meaning of the word (OLD), but the meaning in Christian literature, under the influence of Psalm 27:14, is often "wait for" the Lord. Lentini has "endure the trials of the Lord." Or could the correct meaning be "endure the Lord" as most translators seem to read it (Vogüé, Steidle, Salzburg, Holzherr, Schmitz, Rochais)? See *Index:* Endure.

38.

the Prophet is removed from the text of RM 10.55, but we have taken the liberty of restoring it for the sake of clarity.

bear up (sustinere). Since the object here is *contraria,* this suggests that some such meaning is also meant in the preceding verse.

On your account (Propter te). Psalm 44:22, and Paul's use of it in Romans 8:36, refer to situations of actual physical death, but presumably even the most extreme case of monastic persecution does not go that far. "On your account," is, of course, not accusatory, but means that one willingly dies on behalf of God.

for the Lord's sake (pro Domino) could also be construed as applying directly to "the faithful person" (Steidle, Salzburg).

39.

hopeful (securi de spe), literally "confident in the hope." This seems redundant, but we should retain the Christian word *spes,* which is used in its exact sense here.

him who loved us (eum qui dilexit nos). Paul is referring to the historic paschal action of Jesus Christ. Vague references to what Christ did for us are often regarded by NT exegetes as "theological aorists," or shorthand for the whole Christian mystery. As such, this quote serves as the theological anchor for the whole of step four. See *Index:* Love.

stay their course (subsecuntur) probably means they do not let the threat of death deter them from obedience to God. "We must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29).

40.

You have tried us, O God (Probasti nos, Deus). The typical Hebrew interpretation of national calamity was to see it as the result of sin. There-fore, God was felt to punish the nation by means of national disasters, hostile armies and so on. Since the Jewish language (and mentality?) did not include secondary causality, God is often portrayed as the direct agent of unspeakable mass suffering in a way that a more sophisticated theology cannot accept. When such verses are applied to monastic obedience, extreme caution must be observed. See RB 5 Overview, C.3.

41.

over our heads (super capita nostra). In Psalm 66:12, the reference is probably to the Near Eastern custom of conquerors to place their foot on the heads of captured enemies. It is a measure of the elasticity of patristic-monastic accommodation that this text could be used to bolster religious obedience, even of the most heroic kind.

superior (priore). From this point onward, Benedict will replace the Master's term *maior* for superior. *Maior* will mean "elder." The Master has no elders in his monastery; in his monastic system, only the abbot has prestige. See Borias, 16.17-27; see *Index:* Prior, Senior.

42.

patience (per patientiam). Grammatically, patience can be attached to either the adversity or the obedience. Logic seems to suggest the former. Patience is the focus of RB 7.42-43. Lentini thinks the topic now is injury from equals, not superiors. See *Index:* Patience.

when someone takes their shirt (auferenti tunicam). In Matthew 5:40, the situation seems to be a lawsuit where someone *wants* my shirt. In Jesus' radical ethic, one does not resist: The response is to give the coat as well.

*pressed into service (*angarizati). The *angario* was the imperial postal service, which sometimes forced civilians to carry mail. The term is also used of Simon of Cyrene in Matthew 27:32 (*RB 1980,* 198).

43.

Many mss, including the excellent A (SG 914), omit the words *persecutionem sustinent* here, probably because Benedict has awkwardly repeated *sustinent* (endure). It appears that he has done this so as to avoid *sufferent* of RM 10.60, which may strike him as histrionic or exaggerated martyrdom language. See *Index:* Endure.

disloyal brothers (falsos fratres), literally, "false brothers," who prove they are not true brothers by their perfidious conduct. Paul's turbulent ministry, especially at Corinth, is well known (2 Cor 11:26), but some might naively expect that such things are unknown in Benedictine monasteries. See *Index:* Brother.

they bless those who curse them (maledicentes se benedicent). Cassian's fifth sign seems to apply directly to this verse: "If he hurts nobody else, but also is not annoyed or vexed at wrongs done to himself." Yet this sign evokes a kind of Stoic imperturbability, whereas Paul, and the NT in general, are more interested in mutual charity: "Cursed, they bless" (1 Cor 4:12). In 4.32, Benedict has the fuller form of this aphorism, at least compared to RM. Paul has it in the shortest possible form: *Maledicimur et benedicimus.* Antony is presented by Athanasius as the living embodiment of someone whom suffering and ascesis have not embittered but filled with joy (see *vit. Ant*. 40; Holzherr, 129).

44.

The source of the fifth step is Cassian's second sign: "If he conceals none of his actions, or even of his thoughts, from his superior." The material has undergone at least two important shifts in RM/RB: (1) With Cassian, the matter to be revealed is not just bad thoughts and actions, but *all* the contents of one's mind. These are the *logismoi,* which are then discerned by the elder. See *Index:* Thought. (2) The object of

the disclosure for Cassian is an elder *(senior),* meaning a spiritual director, but for RM/RB it is the abbot. This, of course, is a very different matter, so much so that canon law discourages the sacramental confession of monks to their abbot. As is pointed out by *RB 1980,* 198, the practice in early monasticism was not seen as clearly sacramental, but with the arrival of individual, private confession (seventh–eighth centuries) the identification of the two was normal. The cleansing of the heart is sometimes seen as a necessary preparation for contemplative prayer: "Just as it is impossible for someone to see their face in troubled waters, so also the soul cannot pray to God in a contemplative way if it is not cleansed of all thoughts that are alien to it" (*vit. patr.,* 5.12.13; Holzherr, 129–130).

humble confession (humilem confessionem). Although humility usually implies a certain reticence, in the matter of our inner temptations and torments, it is false modesty to conceal them from the physician of our soul.

45.

Make plain (Revela). NAB for Psalm 37:5 has "commit your way." It is, of course, futile to hide anything at all from the Lord, who sees all. See RB 7.26-29; Prov 15:3. The Bible has little to say about disclosure to a spiritual master. Nevertheless, the biblical concept of *parrhesia* (confidence) can be interpreted as the gift of being able to open oneself in confidence to the Lord and his agents. See *Index:* Reveal.

46.

Confess (Confitemini). Although it suits RM/RB to understand this verb to mean avowal of sin, in fact Psalm 106:1 says that the Lord should be *thanked*. Moreover, Latin *confiteor* can have either meaning. In the Hebrew mentality, one praised the Lord before a third party as a public act of devotion, saying "The Lord is good," etc. Yet for RM/RB, *quoniam* must mean "because," since the confession is about something else. See *Index:* Confess.

47-48.

It is worth repeating that the Hebrew Bible is referring to public confession and not private avowal. Likewise, the biblical writer is talking about things he perceives as offenses against God. That is not true of Cassian's second sign, but it is true of RM/RB, step five. For the Hebrews, though, only God could forgive sin (see Mark 2:1-12).

injustices (injustitias). For the psalmist, and normally in the OT, "justice" *(sedekah)* means faithfulness to the covenant with God. "Injustice"

is not an objective violation of a legal system, but a personal break with God and community. See Kardong, 16.43-73; see *Index:* Justice.

49.

The basis of this sixth step is the seventh sign of Cassian, which reads: "If he is contented with the lowest possible position and considers himself as a bad workman in the case of everything enjoined to him." The remarkable thing about this translation (E. Gibson, 1889) is that it interprets *vilitas* as servile status and reminds us that slavery was still alive and flourishing at the time of Cassian, RM and RB. The irony is that many medieval monasteries would admit only nobles into the ranks of the professed. Most modern translators, e.g., Holzherr, 130, interpret *vilitas* as a reference to consumer goods.

commanded (injunguntur) replaces *praebentur* of Cassian and RM 10.66. Borias, 16.27-37, points out that although Benedict copies *praebere* up to this point, from now on he will replace it with *injungere*. He thinks it is a sign that RB 7 is the point where Benedict begins to seriously assert himself as an author.

worker (operarium) could be interpreted as an actual reference to monastic work, remembering that in Late Antiquity, only slaves were thought fit for manual labor. Or the reference may be biblical, with Luke 17:7-10 as a likely source. To invoke Luke 17 may clarify step six, but it does not make it easy. In both cases, the only acceptable frame of reference is theological: Compared to the majesty of God, every creature is of no consequence. Yet this in no way justified slavery, nor does it sanction the cavalier treatment of monks by authority. In fact, RB 31,34,36 and so on indicate that the needs of the monks are to be carefully attended to by monastic officials (Holzherr, 130). It might be said that only at step six do we arrive at humility, strictly speaking. Up to now, the steps have largely pertained to obedience. Another angle of interpretation lies in RB Prol 14 (see note), where Wisdom calls her adherent *(operarium)* out of a multitude. See *Index:* Work.

It is not hard to imagine a contemporary application of the step. Although competent monks need not imagine themselves incompetent, they should not imagine that their performance of the important tasks thereby confers on them an exalted place in the cenobitic community. In the framework of Cassian, who writes out of the desert experience, menial or even degrading work might be given to a disciple by a master precisely to teach humility (*inst*. 4.23-29). In the cenobitic life, however, where monks are often assigned long-term positions in a complex organization, the implications of unsatisfying or distasteful work are quite different. Here work is not merely ascetical but a much

more positive way of participating in the building up of the kingdom of God. Yet it is unrealistic to think that everyone can be given ideal work, and if a monk makes everything ride on the quality of his work, he is in serious trouble.

50.

The context of Psalm 73:22-23 is the familiar sapiential problem of the apparent injustice of life, where the evil prosper and the good do not. The psalmist gives free vent to recriminations, even against God (1-12), but finally the true fate of the wicked becomes clearer (13-21) and the complainer is silenced (22). In this he resembles Job (Job 42), who seems to undergo the same experience.

and I (et ego). At this point the psalmist finally understands all, which he expresses by the image of closeness to God.

51.

Step seven is a paraphrase of Cassian's eighth step, with a number of biblical citations added. Cassian's point, which can easily be missed in the thicket of scriptural proofs, is that humility should not be merely verbal but a matter of profound conviction. This teaching is very much in line with Cassian's overall purpose of interiorizing monastic life (see Kardong, 14.82-84). Verse 51 is rich in verbal resonances with several earlier monastic texts: Pseudo-Macarius *reg.* 3; *vit. patr.; verba sen.* 3.206; Basil, *reg.* 62; Cassian, *inst*. 12.32.1; 12.33; *conf.* 12.13; 24.16. An important NT parallel for this verse is Philippians 2:3: "Let all parties think humbly of others as superior to themselves." This fits closely with Philippians 2:4: "Each of you should look to others' interests rather than to his own," which is quoted by Benedict in 72.7. Because the monk *willingly* embraces lowliness, Holzherr, 130–131, considers this step the height to which previous steps lead, but RB 7.35 already contains that idea (see note) and is more highly developed.

with all his heart (intimo cordis . . . affectu), literally, "with the inmost feeling of his heart." The saying seems to combine both place and emotion, and the meaning is obvious: true humility must not be feigned or superficial, but totally sincere. See *Index:* Heart.

lower and less honorable (inferiorem et viliorem). From the context, *vilior* must pertain to persons and not things, which corroborates our interpretation of the previous step. Also in unity with the previous step, this one depends entirely on faith. In that realm, one is totally dependent on grace and therefore without personal merit. But from the psychological point of view this conviction can slip into low self-esteem and even self-loathing. See Pedrizetti, passim.

52.

abases himself (humilians se). Throughout step seven, the verb *humiliare* is used somewhat flexibly. In this verse, the meaning is voluntary self-abasement, but in the next verse, the passive form conveys the idea of bitter, involuntary disgrace. Finally, in v. 53, God is said to "humiliate" the psalmist, which is normally a negative experience, but there it leads to enlightenment. All of which points up the sharp difference between humility and humiliation. Modern psychology would insist that true humiliation usually produces resentment, which is an obstacle to growth in humility. See *Index:* Humility.

Psalm 22:7 is the cry of someone who has experienced extreme repression, even torture. It is precious to the Church because of its association with the crucified Jesus (Matt 27:39). Although step seven, unlike step four, is not concerned with external oppression, it is important in that it associates monastic humility with the Cross of Christ. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus calls himself "meek and humble of heart," which seems to mesh well with this seventh step.

53.

raised up (exaltatus). The situation seems to be one of a fall from the heights to the depths, whether as a punishment is not clear. The Hebrew psalm (88:16), though, does not have this idea at all: "I am dazed with the burden of your dread" (NAB); "I suffer thy terrors, I am helpless" (RSV).

54.

Psalm 119:71 provides a clear teaching on the educative value of suffering, which suggests that v. 53 also refers to education.

55.

The source is Cassian's sixth sign: "If he does nothing and ventures on nothing to which he is not urged by the Common Rule or by the example of our elders." The addition of the word *monasterii* in RM 10.72 is significant, since it shifts the focus from the whole monastic tradition to the Rule of *this* community. Benedict then makes an equally decisive move by dropping off RM 10.73-74, which claims that *maiora* means "abbot." Without that specification, RB 7.55 teaches mutual obedience. See *Index:* Monastery.

Read in a certain way, this step is a perfect formula for a hidebound conservative system that is determined to exclude all fresh impulses and ideas. On the other hand, one joins a living monastic community in order to become an integral member, and this can only be done by taking on the attitudes and lifestyle of the group. In an age of individualism such

as the present, there is a temptation to view community as a mere context for one's personal life-project. The eighth step boldly points out the folly of that approach. It is a thoroughly communitarian step and one that shifts the emphasis of the ladder from the internal (steps 1–7) to the external (steps 8–12).

56.

Steps nine, ten and eleven are based on Cassian's signs nine and ten, and all of them refer to the virtue of silence. Since steps 2–5 are really about obedience, the triad of virtues treated in RB 5,6 and 7 are also dealt with in RB 7 itself. As we indicated in the overview of RB 6, Benedict does not have a particularly profound teaching on silence. This may be because the early monastic doctrine of silence sometimes depends more on the Stoic philosophers than on the Bible. See Brock, 94–100.

out of love for silence (taciturnitatem habens). We follow here the interpretation of Wathen that *taciturnitas* for Benedict has more reference to the intrinsic value of silence than to the mere practice of nonspeech (see note 6.2). See *Index:* Silence.

until spoken to (usque ad interrogationem). This comment echoes RM 9, which presents an elaborate casuistry of how and when a monk may request to speak, although the teaching here is stricter: the initiative must come (presumably) from the superior. In his chapter on silence, Benedict omits this entire discussion (see RB 6 Overview). Texts such as RB 43.8 and 49.7 indicate that Benedict did not in fact impose total silence on his monks. Neither does Cassian demand it in the ninth sign, prohibiting only loud, boisterous talk *(clamosus in voce).*

58.

walk straight (dirigitur) in the sense of doing well or prospering (see Blaise, s.v. *dirigo,* 6).

chatterbox (linguosus). In Psalm 140:12 the problem is malicious talk ("wicked tongue" NAB), but here in step nine the issue is excessive talk of any kind (*multiloquio:* 7.57). See *Index:* Speech.

59.

ready to laugh at the slightest provocation (facilis et promptus in risu). A paraphrase in an attempt to avoid two apparently synonymous adjectives. It is frivolity that is condemned, and not good humor.

raises (exaltat). As in 4.54 (see note), what is forbidden is raucous laughter and not all mirth. For Lent, Benedict proposes a toning down of jokes (*scurrilitas:* 49.7), so apparently monasteries were not dour places.

60.

careful (rationabilia). As he does also in 2.18, Benedict replaces the Master's term *sancta* with this apparently secular term. The word *rationabilia,* however, did not have a secular connotation for patristic writers (see note 2.18). Still, it is true that Benedict is much more interested than the Master in promoting a general atmosphere of civilized communication between all members of the community. The Master only allows conversation about pious topics, provided the abbot is not present. See *Index:* Reason.

speaks at all, he does so (loquitur . . . loquatur). The unusual repetition of the same verb seems to call for a strong interpretation. The eleventh step is, after all, aimed at reticence.

Degree eleven differs from degree nine in that the latter counsels no speech at all, while eleven wants speech to be marked by humility. This seems to be an admission that life demands speech. It also leads to the conclusion that proper speech can manifest humility quite as well as complete silence. See Lentini, 160; see *Index:* Speech.

62.

The last step has been added to Cassian's list by the Master, with special emphasis on bodily humility. This seems to be an attempt to balance up the demand in step seven that humility be internalized and not just verbal. The Master may also wish to make sure that the reader sees that he has followed up on his initial intention to insert the rungs of humility into both sides of the ladder, soul and body (RM 10.9). See *Index:* Body.

apparent (videntibus se . . . indicet). It is difficult to know how to render this group of words, since one cannot "indicate" anything that is internal *(corde).* Nor does it seem that the monk's *purpose* is to radiate humility!

63.

This sentence must rate as one of the Master's most didactic and tedious creations, and Benedict does nothing to improve it. Nevertheless, the very length of the list actually adds to the literal, concrete character of the statement, and that may be the point.

Work of God (Opere Dei) seems somewhat out of place, since the rest of the items in the list are places. What is more, *Opus Dei* takes place in the oratory (RB 52.2). Some mss lack *Dei* (of God), but that may simply show that the scribes were uneasy, for the result does nothing to solve the problem. See *Index:* Work of God.

The stylized posture for humility (head bowed and eyes on the ground) may seem artificial. Holzherr, 133, thinks it may stem ultimately from the idea that everyone in the community, even the sick and the old, can witness to God's presence in some way (see Basil, *reg*. 86).

64.

aware . . . consider (aestimans . . . aestimet). Although the dependent and main verbs are identical, one hesitates to reproduce this lapse of style (RM 10.84) in translation. Moreover, the verbs must mean something different, since the first one speaks of knowledge and the second, of imagination.

tremendo (terrifying). Although it begins as a statement on physical humility, step twelve is also a powerful incitement to fear of the Lord, which makes it a reprise of the first step (see note 7.10). The repetition of the fear motif at the very end of the ladder can seem to undermine the claim in 7.67 that progress in humility is meant to transcend fear. See *Index:* Fear.

65.

raise my eyes (levare oculos meos). The quote given here is not found in any one gospel but is a conflation of Luke 18:13 (the Pharisee and the publican) and Matthew 8:8 (I am not worthy). Other vocabulary used here is found in *orat. Manassae* 9. The figure of the publican, of course, is perfectly appropriate to close the chapter on humility, and forms an inclusion with the first verse (7.1), which quotes Luke 18:14. See *Index:* Eye.

67.

At this point, the long, long ladder of humility has been climbed, and the author must tell us where we have gotten. The original creator, John Cassian, speaks of a love that transcends fear as the next spiritual stage after the signs of humility have been experienced (*inst*. 4.39). The Master also sees the ladder as a passage from fear to love, and Benedict passes on this idea, with some adjustments. On the other hand, Benedict changes the lengthy eschatological ending of the Master to something that takes place in this life.

perfect love of God (ad caritatem Dei . . . perfecta). RM here quotes 1 John 4:18, whereas Cassian had merely paraphrased it. Normally this would be a step forward, but in this case it is not. The reason is that 1 John 4:18 means something different than Cassian does by both "fear" and "love." For 1 John, "the perfect love of God" is God's own charity which is received by us. When we put it into practice through love for

neighbor, we "perfect" it (see Brown, 530–531). Cassian does not speak of "perfect" love here, but normally he considers love to be attained only after one has made considerable progress in moral virtue (see Kardong, 14.95-96). By quoting 1 John 4:18, RM/RB risk giving the impression that *our* perfect love for God is superior to any fear for God we might have. Cassian is well aware of the different kinds of love, as he shows in *conf*. 11.6: "Love (*caritas:* divine love) inflames in us a holy love (*amor:* human love) for Christ and for the fruits which flow from the Spirit" (cited in Holzherr, 134). Another problem lies in this: Fear of the Lord (steps one and twelve) in its proper Jewish context is virtually equal to piety or reverential awe of God's holiness, which is by no means a condition to be transcended. See Kardong, 7.243-248. See *Index:* Fear, Love, Perfection.

68.

spontaneously (naturaliter ex consuetudine) is Lentini's graceful rendition, 163. The Master has added *ex consuetudine* to Cassian, thinking perhaps of cenobitic discipline. Lentini also notes that RB 7 ends like the Prologue (48-49) on an encouraging note. Both chapters are long and somewhat severe, so perhaps the author felt the reader needs encouragement at the end.

69.

"He will do this" is implied and demanded by the shorter sentences used in this translation. At this point, source criticism reveals a fascinating layer of development. Cassian concludes *inst*. 4.39 by saying that the next level of progress is to act and live no longer out of fear but out of love for the good in itself *(amore ipsius boni).* This remark is not casual for Cassian but in fact one of his main moral principles (see Kardong, 15.260-263). Although the phrase "love for the good in itself" sounds secular, elsewhere (*conf*. 11.6), Cassian closely yokes it to "love for Christ" *(affectus Christi).* For his part, the Master expands the phrase to "love for good habit itself and delight in virtue," which is not very different. Benedict, though, makes a critical move forward by introducing the person of Christ, thereby sealing the entire chapter on humility with his name. In truth, the chapter is somewhat lacking in Christian references and greatly profits from this addition. Even fear of the Lord must give way to love for Christ. This is not to deny, however, the validity of Cassian's ending. See *Index:* Christ.

70.

With the final verse, there seem to be at least two alternative interpretations possible: (1) the Holy Spirit is the divine instrument of

purification for the monk; (2) the Lord will show all this *to* his workman rather than *in* his workman. Since Benedict has removed *ab* (by) from *Spiritu Sancto,* it looks a little less like an ablative of agent for the cleansing. The idea of virtue shining forth in someone is the message of step twelve (see note 7.62). There is some worry with the idea that the Holy Spirit only enters the picture *after* one has achieved a state of considerable purification, since that implies that it was by dint of human effort that this was accomplished. Nonetheless, Benedict says so little about the Spirit in his Rule that it is impossible to say exactly what role is played by the third divine person in his spirituality. RM 10.123 ends with the following *explicit:* "Here end the acts of the heart's service: how to flee sin for fear of God." Clearly, the Master considers the whole Rule up to this point as primarily an ascetical flight from sin. Since Benedict has dropped the entire section (RM 10.92-123: description of heavenly delights), it is unsure if he too conceives the whole first part of the Rule as ascesis. See *Index:* Spirit.

RB 7.67-70 is the only place in the Rule where all three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned together (Borias, 6.6-16).

RB 7 Overview

The large chapter on humility contains much that needs careful interpretation. Not only is the value of humility little appreciated in our society, but there has been a lack of serious examination of the biblical dimensions of this virtue. Moreover, Benedict's chapter on humility is but the third stage in a literary development that starts with Cassian and runs through the Master. Any serious study of RB 7 must place it in the trajectory of that development.

A. Biblical Humility

1. Although the Bible is more impacted by Greek thought than was once thought, humility was not a high value for the pagan world. (On this whole topic, see Wengst, *Humility*.) Some Greek terms seem to correspond to our notion of humility, but on closer inspection they are miles removed. For example, *tapeinos* means a lowly mentality, but this was despised as characteristic of slaves. No Greek noble would want to think or act like a slave. On the other hand, gentleness *(praïs)* toward one's inferiors was recommended as proper conduct for a gentleman.

It is also notable that these two mentalities are never posited of the same person. From the standpoint of the Greek classical writers, who were invariably aristocrats, they were incompatible. Nor was humility

purification for the monk; (2) the Lord will show all this *to* his workman rather than *in* his workman. Since Benedict has removed *ab* (by) from *Spiritu Sancto,* it looks a little less like an ablative of agent for the cleansing. The idea of virtue shining forth in someone is the message of step twelve (see note 7.62). There is some worry with the idea that the Holy Spirit only enters the picture *after* one has achieved a state of considerable purification, since that implies that it was by dint of human effort that this was accomplished. Nonetheless, Benedict says so little about the Spirit in his Rule that it is impossible to say exactly what role is played by the third divine person in his spirituality. RM 10.123 ends with the following *explicit:* "Here end the acts of the heart's service: how to flee sin for fear of God." Clearly, the Master considers the whole Rule up to this point as primarily an ascetical flight from sin. Since Benedict has dropped the entire section (RM 10.92-123: description of heavenly delights), it is unsure if he too conceives the whole first part of the Rule as ascesis. See *Index:* Spirit.

RB 7.67-70 is the only place in the Rule where all three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned together (Borias, 6.6-16).

RB 7 Overview

The large chapter on humility contains much that needs careful interpretation. Not only is the value of humility little appreciated in our society, but there has been a lack of serious examination of the biblical dimensions of this virtue. Moreover, Benedict's chapter on humility is but the third stage in a literary development that starts with Cassian and runs through the Master. Any serious study of RB 7 must place it in the trajectory of that development.

A. Biblical Humility

1. Although the Bible is more impacted by Greek thought than was once thought, humility was not a high value for the pagan world. (On this whole topic, see Wengst, *Humility*.) Some Greek terms seem to correspond to our notion of humility, but on closer inspection they are miles removed. For example, *tapeinos* means a lowly mentality, but this was despised as characteristic of slaves. No Greek noble would want to think or act like a slave. On the other hand, gentleness *(praïs)* toward one's inferiors was recommended as proper conduct for a gentleman.

It is also notable that these two mentalities are never posited of the same person. From the standpoint of the Greek classical writers, who were invariably aristocrats, they were incompatible. Nor was humility

toward God part of their thinking, probably because they did not have a clear idea of the transcendence of the divinity (Adnés, 1136–1388).

2. The Jews, on the other hand, were able to comprehend lowliness and gentleness at the same time. They did not consider oppression a good thing nor something to be sought, but they realized that oppression need not make one bitter or crush one's spirit. Thus Zephaniah 3:12 can speak of the returning exiles as both *ani* (oppressed) and *anaw* (gentle and meek). The Messiah will not only be kind to the weak (Isa 11:2), but will himself be lowly (Zech 9:9). Yet there was a troubling tendency among the Jewish spiritual elite, some of them quite wealthy and powerful, to coopt the term *anawim* (the weak and meek) for themselves. Of course, oppression in itself does not guarantee spiritual growth, and some of the poor learn nothing from it but hatred.

3. The New Testament, of course, has a special interest in humility, since its main protagonist, Jesus Christ, was not only humiliated but himself a model of humility. This comes through in many places, but mention of two capital texts should suffice for our purposes.

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus extends an invitation to "all you who labor and are burdened." This can be interpreted in many senses, but it cannot be denied that the Palestinian peasants Jesus addressed qualified for the modern category of "oppressed peoples." Jesus offers them a lighter yoke, and says that they can learn of him "because I am meek and humble of heart." It can hardly be accidental that Matthew uses both *tapeinos* and *praüs* of Jesus: he is both the humble Son of the Father and the one who reaches out to his heavily burdened neighbors.

A. de Vogüé, 7.14-17 passim, puts great emphasis on this passage as the ultimate source of the Master's "school of the Lord's service" ("Learn of me") but he says little about it as the basis for the chapter on humility. That is not surprising, since RM 10/RB 7 do not quote Matthew 11:29, though they invoke dozens of other less helpful passages of Scripture.

They do, however, quote Philippians 2:8, "Christ became obedient unto death," as a testimony for step three of humility. In this precious early hymn to Christ, he is described as emptying himself *(kenosis)* to the point of become a "slave" *(doulos)*. Although sociologically speaking, Jesus was probably not himself of the oppressed peasant class, he identified with the outcasts, and paid the ultimate price for that commitment. It is important to note that Jesus did not simply "decide" to become humble; he became humble through humiliation. In Philippians 2:3, Paul urges Christians to share the humble mentality *(tapeinophrosune)* of Christ.

B. Cassian on Humility

1. For John Cassian (ca. A.D. 360–435), humility is but one part of a comprehensive theory of spiritual progress. (Much of what follows is based on the seminal study of humility by A. de Vogüé 3.207-288; 4.281-370.) In his *Institute* 4, which he presents as a conference of the Egyptian Abba Pinufius to a candidate for the monastic life, Cassian twice enunciates this theory (4.39 and 4.43) in rather succinct form. Although Benedict, through the Master, has based his chapter on humility on *inst.* 4.39 alone, we can also refer to 4.43 for a fuller picture of Cassian's views. At any rate, *inst.* 4.39 is the basic source of Benedict's treatise on humility.

For Cassian, the movement toward God begins with the Fear of the Lord. This causes a person to put aside possessions and become a monk. At this second stage, the task is different: to be rid of self-will (desires: 4.43), which is clearly a harder and subtler thing than mere dispossession. At this point, Cassian does not dwell on how this is accomplished, but he does note that there are empirical signs *(indices)* that one is making some progress in the project. For Cassian, the result of a successful monastic existence is the passage from fear of punishment to love of virtue in itself (4.39). In 4.43, he gives this another name, purity of heart. Whatever he calls it, Cassian clearly sees it as the doorway to the contemplative life.

2. In view of what will be made of Cassian's description of humility, it is important to repeat that it is only part of an integrated process. Moreover, the ten signs of humility that he presents are in no way taxative. There could just as well be thirty, as we find in John Climacus' Ladder. Nor are they presented as a series of tasks to be performed. Rather, they are simply experiences of God's grace that can indicate that one is growing in humility. See Kardong, 7.243-248.

C. The Master's Ladder of Humility

1. The Rule of the Master has taken Cassian's rather unpretentious little treatise and expanded it into a considerable literary edifice. Not only has the chapter of 121 verses now got an introduction (10.1-9) and an epilogue (10.92-121), but the whole thing has been structured on the elaborate symbol of a ladder. This image is used to give shape to the twelve (not ten) steps the Master presents, and he uses the very form of a ladder, with its two sides, to symbolize bodily and spiritual humility (10.20-29).

In transforming Cassian's signs into steps, the Master gives the material an important twist in the direction of asceticism. A ladder, for all

its utility, is essentially an instrument of hard labor. To climb it involves strenuous effort. Thus humility in this form becomes a task, not a revelation. Whether intended or not, such a ladder is vulnerable to the charge of self-salvation (see Nygren, 441 passim). Moreover, the ladder image suggests a series to be followed, one step after another. Yet the logic of the Master's steps is not apparent, nor does he ever say explicitly that he is creating a series.

2. Perhaps the greatest alteration that the Master makes in Cassian's scheme is to move the Fear of the Lord into the mainstream of the steps. Rather than being the introduction, it now figures as the first step on the ladder (RM 10.10-41). Besides being moved, the theme has undergone a huge development of no less than thirty-one verses. Most of these are biblical quotes, but there is still a very strong statement about the need to be ever mindful that God is present and sees everything we do. What is more, everything is being noted by the Divine Judge, who will sentence to hell those who choose to violate his commandments.

This rather ferocious theology, which seems to owe much to Basil, *reg.* 2; 34; 46; 60; 66, should not distract us from appreciating its positive value. What it does is to situate humility solidly in the framework of reverential awe *(tapeinos)* for the All-Holy One. All of Cassian's signs are oriented toward reverence of the neighbor *(praïs),* but that virtue must be anchored by religious awe of God. J. Gribomont, 1.250-251, notes that this key theme from Basil makes him in fact a major influence, if not *the* major influence on the Rule (see note 7.10). As for Benedict, he will base his whole communal spirituality on the need to fear the Lord who meets us in our brother—and especially the weak brother (see note 7.10).

But the Master makes an even more remarkable use of Fear of the Lord when he repeats it as a subtheme of step twelve (RM 10.84-86). This of course makes it the frame of the whole ladder series, but it also tends to contradict Cassian's claim that humility leads from fear to love. The Master dutifully copies that statement in 10.87-91, but it no longer makes much sense. In fact, his ladder has led from fear to fear! Or, to put it another way, one can never progress beyond religious awe and reverence for the great God.

3. Another major piece of remodeling that the Master has imposed on his Cassianic source consists in a long, graphic description of heaven (10.92-121) added to the end of the treatise. As he did at the end of his equally long *Ars Sancta* (3.78-95), the Master shows that the monastic life, if pursued faithfully, can be expected to lead directly to heaven. As charming as some might find this material (see Frank, 88–107), it constitutes a sharp break with Cassian's central thesis. Now,

instead of humility leading to love, it leads to heaven. Of course, as we just noted, the Master repeats the statement on love, but it is quickly overwhelmed by the colorful language about heaven.

This exercise in extreme future eschatology is completely characteristic of the Master. Rarely if ever does he express even a hope that the ordinary monk will make progress in the spiritual life here and now. All he really offers is a hard struggle in this life ("the ladder of this life" 10.87) culminating in heaven. Cassian, on the other hand, fully expects that there will be progress (see note 7.69). Thus the Master's ladder is shown to go nowhere in this world, while Cassian's system does have a strongly dynamic thrust.

4. There are many other smaller, subtler shifts in the Master's use of Cassian's signs. We cannot mention them all, but two more seem noteworthy. Steps 2–4 incorporate signs 3–5, but the Master gives the material a new direction. Whereas Cassian concentrates primarily on humble acceptance of discernment from one's spiritual director in these three signs, the Master converts them into obedience to one's abbot.

In a sense, the Master had no choice in the matter, for he was writing in a different context than Cassian. Cassian is basically thinking of relations between a master and a disciple, while the Master is writing a rule for cenobites, who live under a rule and an abbot. Of course, it is quite possible to humbly obey one's director in much the way a cenobite obeys the abbot, and the result will be much the same: freedom from the shackles of self-will that tend to undermine the best intentions in the world.

But there is a heavy overlay of authority in the cenobitic system that is simply not present in the desert spirituality of Cassian. Once one has committed oneself by vows to a given community and its abbot, humble obedience is not a daily free choice but a constant expectation. Now the virtue is not one of supererogation but of absolute necessity for the health of the community and the institution. This should not override all considerations of the freedom and the dignity of the individual, but it is an added dimension that must be taken into consideration.

Finally, the Master introduces a strong external element into the pursuit of humility. We have noted how the sides of the ladder equal body and soul (note 7.9). In step twelve, the physical aspect of humility is reiterated in rather extravagant fashion: "His humility is no longer only in his heart but always manifest even in his body to those who see him, that is to say, at the Work of God, in the oratory, in the monastery, in the garden, on the road, in the fields and any place whatever, whether he is sitting, walking or standing still, with head always bowed, his gaze fixed on the ground" (10.82-83).

This is probably a development that Cassian would not have wished for his material. After all, one of his primary purposes in writing his voluminous *Institutes* and *Conferences* was precisely to dematerialize monasticism (see note 7.51). This does not mean that he cared nothing for monastic practices, but they certainly were not the *goal* of the spiritual life, or even the ascetical life, as they appear to be in the Master's Ladder. But this is to assume that the Master has intended to set up a progression from steps 1 to 12, which is not at all certain. And it must be added that RM does reproduce in step 7 Cassian's insistence that humility must not only be verbal (external) but felt in the heart.

D. Benedict's de Humilitate

1. Benedict has largely taken over the work of the Master for his chapter 7 on humility. Compared to the Master's rather massive restructuring of Cassian's *inst.* 4.39, RB 7 is not particularly original. Nevertheless, Benedict has made his own modest changes in the material, the most important of which will be mentioned here.

2. The Master introduces each step of his ladder with a stereotyped formula: "Then the disciple goes up the X rung of humility on the ladder of heaven if. . . ." Benedict reduces this to the laconic "The X step of humility is. . . ." Sometimes this gets him into grammatical difficulties, but there are also substantial issues at stake. By eliminating the constant mention of "the disciple," Benedict distances himself from the rather heavy-handed authority patterns of the Master. And by avoiding the constant repetition of "the ladder of heaven," he also tones down the eschatological element of RM.

This removal of the ladder image throughout the treatise goes along with the removal of RM 10.14-29, where the sins of the various parts of the body are enumerated and dealt with. The general effect is to back off from an elaboration of the ladder image, which is useful when not overused.

3. A minuscule change with major consequences comes with the introduction of the name of Christ at the very end of the treatise by Benedict: " . . . no longer out of fear of hell, but out of love for Christ, good habit and delight in virtue." Like many readers, Benedict may have found it rather odd for Cassian to end his signs of humility with a claim that they would lead to "love of goodness itself." This seems like something drawn from Stoicism, but in fact Cassian elsewhere joins love of the good and love of Christ (*conf.* 11.6), so it is probably not at all secular. At any rate, Benedict does something very useful in capping his long chapter with the name of Christ, for that name does

not appear very often in this long treatise. Without it, one risks mere voluntarist asceticism devoid of grace.

Another place where Benedict makes Christ paramount is in step three. Speaking about the need to humbly obey the abbot, the Master provides his usual plethora of biblical citations. Of these, Benedict retains only one, the famous Philippians 2:8 concerning Christ's obedience unto death. We have seen (above, A.3) how important this text is in establishing the Christological basis of humility.

4. We noted above that the Master has given the treatise on humility a strongly eschatological cast. It appears that this was more than Benedict could endure, so he took measures to tone it down. Above all, he removed the long, and idiosyncratic, description of the material joys of heaven. This shortening is extremely significant, for it means that Benedict has clung to the basic pattern of Cassian: humility leads from fear to love.

We just saw that Benedict adds Christ to the love taught by Cassian, but this should not obscure the fact that he ends his long chapter talking about love and not heaven. In this matter Benedict is closer to Cassian than he is to the Master. Like Cassian, he hopes and expects to see progress and growth in the monks, and that generally means that they internalize monastic and Christian values to the point that they *love* them.

5. In yet another way does Benedict show that he thinks that love is important. Again in step three, he inserts "for the love of God" in the Master's discussion of obedience. Strictly speaking, this is illogical if the ladder of humility is to lead to love. Nevertheless, Cassian's strange idea that love only comes at the end of ascetical progress (note 7.67) has the effect of making this very long chapter of RM/RB rather loveless. Perhaps Benedict could not abide the tension that this creates in a Christian document, so he moved love forward to step three.

6. One last change of Benedict can be mentioned, even though it involves only one word. In 7.35, he has apparently replaced the Master's term *constantia* with *conscientia.* Now this makes the text much less lucid (see note), but he is willing to risk obscurity in an attempt to avoid "martyr-language." Elsewhere as well (7.59), Benedict has sidestepped this theme, perhaps for the reason that it easily feeds into self-pity.

In his richly detailed study of this material, Vogüé, 3.266ff., points out that lying behind step four, on obedience in very harsh circumstances, is Cassian's doctrine in *inst.* 4.8-9 that the superior ought to sometimes test the disciple with deliberately hard and absurd commands. He argues further that since the Master uses the same biblical

testimonia as Cassian (Luke 10:16 and John 6:38) for obedience, he apparently wishes to teach the same thing. Since the Master elsewhere (e.g., Thp 40) says that the will of the monk should be systematically thwarted, it is not hard to believe he follows Cassian on this point. I would deny, though, that Benedict means to imply this harsh view of spiritual authority. Nowhere does he express this dubious view of monastic education in humility.

E. Concluding Remarks

1. After this long overview of the longest of all the chapters in RB, can we come to any conclusions? Perhaps it would be good to ask how faithful the monastic teaching on humility is to the witness of the Bible?

First, it must be admitted that the use of Scripture in this chapter is often disappointing to someone who is trained to look for the original meaning of the biblical texts. What we find in many cases are OT texts, especially from the psalms, used for purposes for which they were never intended. The use of Psalm 131:2 in RB 7.4 ("as a mother does a weaned child") is only the most dramatic example of a very common phenomenon in this chapter.

In itself, this inaccurate use of the Bible is excusable, since it is usually based on the translation used by the Master. Furthermore, the points that the Master (and Benedict) make with these texts are valid and generally in harmony with the patristic use of Scripture. By and large, they find ascetical and interior meanings for texts that are social and external in scope.

On the other hand, it is surprising how many seemingly obvious biblical passages on humility have been overlooked by the Master when he set out to provide scriptural witnesses for Cassian's rather spare text. Why is Jesus "meek and humble of heart" not invoked (Matt 11:29)? Why is Luke 17:7 (the worthless workman) not applied to degree six? Why is so little place given to Pauline texts, when humility is a major theme for the Apostle (see esp. 2 Cor 10ff.)? Of course there are potentially hundreds of biblical passages that could have been used, but at least we can say that these would have been preferable to the dozens of ineffective psalm texts that are used.

2. Yet when we study the biblical data on humility, as we did in the beginning of this Overview, we notice a problem that seems to be almost intrinsic to the topic, namely, humility is not the same as humiliation. Nor does humiliation automatically lead to humility. That is quite apparent in the Beatitudes, where Matthew (5:3) finds it necessary to add "in spirit" to Luke's macarism: "Blessed are the poor" (6:20).

To state the matter differently, the Bible sometimes seems to be primarily the offer of Good News to the downtrodden and humiliated ("all you who labor and are burdened": Matt 11:28). At other times, though, the emphasis is more moral: "humbly regard others as more important than yourselves" (Phil 2:3). In the monastic Rules, of course, the approach is basically moral. RM 10/RB 7 is not addressed to those who have been trampled and oppressed, but rather to monks who wish to make spiritual progress. They are advised to humble themselves before God and their neighbor so as to conform to the divine will and avoid the trap of self-will.

The one exception, however, is step four, which discusses the case of the monk who has encountered harsh and even unjust authority. Here one does not need to find ways to exercise humility; one has been overtaken by a humiliating situation not of one's own choosing and that one would not choose. But this is the only instance of that kind in RB 7. Mostly it is a matter of someone freely choosing ascetical humility for purposes of spiritual growth.

Of course there is nothing wrong with this, and there is a good deal to be said in favor of it. There is, however, an occupational hazard involved here, and it is that a monk may come to think of himself as one of the truly humble ones of the earth. As a matter of fact, few monks qualify for this designation. Anyone with the means and education to be consciously pursuing humility is probably not one of the humiliated poor that the Church now calls "God's favorites." As the Bible itself shows, it has always been the tendency of pious people to take over the titles such as "poor" and "humble" which rightfully belong to the wretched of the earth.

3. Finally, we have to admit that RB 7 is somewhat unwieldy and confusing in its present state. This is not surprising, since Benedict is working with a vast, overgrown text of the Master that was already a reworking of a much more concise and tightly knit unit of John Cassian. What is more, the Master has changed Cassian's original plan sufficiently to obscure it. For his part, Benedict accepts RM 10 in most respects, but makes a second set of adjustments. With all this editing, we can expect that there would be certain anomalies and confusions resulting. Still, to study the developmental process behind this complex chapter is surely to gain insight into Benedict's mentality and method.

VIII: DE OFFICIIS DIVINIS IN NOCTIBUS

[1]Hiemis tempore, id est a kalendas Novembres usque in Pascha, iuxta considerationem rationis, octava hora noctis surgendum est, [2]ut modice amplius de media nocte pausetur et iam digesti surgant. [3]Quod vero restat post vigilias a fratribus qui psalterii vel lectionum aliquid indigent meditationi inserviatur.

[4]A Pascha autem usque ad supradictas Novembres, sic temperetur hora ut vigiliarum agenda parvissimo intervallo, quo fratres ad necessaria naturae exeant, mox matutini, qui incipiente luce agendi sunt, subsequantur.

RB 8: THE DIVINE OFFICE AT NIGHT

1. In wintertime, that is, from November first until Easter, right reason dictates they should arise at the eighth hour of the night. 2. That way they can rest a little more than half the night and rise with their food digested. 3. The time that remains after Vigils should be used for the learning of psalms and lessons by those brothers who need to do so.

4. From Easter to the aforesaid November first, the time is to be regulated as follows: Vigils should be followed immediately by Matins at daybreak, with a very short interval in between, when the brothers can go out for the demands of nature.

RB 8 Notes

T

As in the Rule of the Master, Benedict begins his liturgical section with a chapter on the Night Office (Vigils). Although he sharply curtails the material (RB 8.1-4 = RM 33.1-26), he repeats the pattern of treating winter before summer. The major change, though, is that the Master's liturgical section is placed much later in the document; by moving it forward to follow immediately on the "doctrinal section" (Vogüé), Benedict may wish to give it more prominence.

at night (noctibus). The monastic Night Office is based on the early Christian vigil service, which was held before great feasts. Sometimes the early monks stayed up all night, as they still do in the Eastern Church. Benedict's monks do not, but they rise very early to watch for the Lord. It can be said that Vigils (8.3,4) is the Office most characteristic of monks, while Matins and Vespers are the property of the whole Church. See *Index:* Vigils.

1.

November first (kalendas novembres) is the beginning of the winter liturgical season in RB, but the winter meal schedule commences September thirteenth (41.6) and the wintertime for *lectio* is computed from October first (48.10). Probably Benedict chooses November first to accommodate Easter, which is always after the spring equinox (March twenty-first) (Lentini, 168). For the Master, the entire winter schedule begins September twenty-first (33.27). In general, Benedict will make many adjustments in the rather rigid schedule of the Master, giving the impression that long experience has taught him what actually works and what does not (see Kardong, 25.101-102; 3.47-50).

right reason dictates (juxta considerationem rationis). An alternate translation could be "at what they calculate to be the eighth hour" (*RB 1980,* 203). Vogüé, 2.508, thinks that the term *consideratio* implies a balanced judgment, in this case of the ideal hour for Vigils (midnight: RM 33.1 according to Ps 119:62) and the needs of the community.

eighth (octava hora) refers to the hours of the solar night and not "clock time." Benedict's monks probably retired about 7 P.M. and rose about 2 A.M. in winter.

2.

a little more than half the night (modice amplius de media nocte). In the dead of winter, the night in S. Italy would extend from about 5 P.M. to 7 A.M. Another possibility could be "a little past the middle of the night" *(RB 1980).* This is a mitigation of RM 33.1 and even perhaps of RB 16.4. In contrast, Columban (PL 80.216) demands that his monks "come tired to bed, asleep on their feet, and be forced to get up before their sleep is complete" (Lentini, 168).

with their food digested (jam digesti). Some translators content themselves with vague equivalents like *dispos* (Vogüé, Rochais); *ausgeruht* (Steidle, Salzburg), but the text clearly enough speaks about digestion. Cassian says explicitly "with their meal already digested" (*conf.* 2.26; Lentini, 168). Especially if the monks ate a large meal just before retiring, as they did in Lent and on fast days (41.7), the bulk of their digestion would be accomplished during sleep. While Benedict is explicit enough on this point, RM 33.19-21 is revoltingly graphic. Late meals are still the custom in all Latin countries.

learn (meditationi). For the monks of this period, *meditatio* was not the silent intellectual exercise it is for us, but rather the verbal repetition of a memorized text. Pachomius, *pr.* 139-140, demands not only that a candidate be able to read, but also to have memorized some

psalms before acceptance into the community (*pr.* 139-140). He also wants the monks to "ruminate" Scripture while at work or walking from place to place (*pr.* 28; 37; 116; 122; see Holzherr, 137). In RB 8.3, the monks are told to work at preparing for the Office by the study of the texts that they will need to use. Some might memorize psalms, for each one did not have a book, and even if they did, the light would be too poor to read by. Some might need to practice reading lessons, for, due to a lack of punctuation, ancient texts were not easy to decipher at first glance. See *Index:* Meditation.

4.

time (hora) could refer to rising or Vigils. Since the hour of dawn constantly changes, the time for rising in summer had to be shifted along with it. This, together with the general problem of telling time at night before the invention of the spring-driven clock, made bell-ringing a difficult duty (RB 47). See Stock, 31–38.

The Latin grammar of this verse is not easy to comprehend. Apparently Vigils *(vigiliarum agenda)* is a stranded nominative, or perhaps it is the accusative object of "follow" (against Lentini, 172).

Matins (matutini) used to be called "Lauds" in most monasteries. "Matins" was the Office of Readings Benedict calls *vigiliae*. In our translation we use Benedict's terminology because the traditional language has lapsed in most American monasteries. We now call Vigils "Office of Readings" and Matins "Morning Prayer."

very short (parvissimo intervallo). Lentini wryly remarks that Benedict is no doubt thinking of those monks who habitually go directly from bed to church. Many medieval Cistercian monasteries such as Fontenay were built with the dormitory opening directly into the church. Unlike the monks of the Master (33.3-9), Benedict's monks do not return to bed after Vigils. Of course, the former rise at midnight or shortly thereafter, so more sleep is imperative.

IX: QUANTI PSALMI DICENDI SUNT NOCTURNIS HORIS

[1]Hiemis tempore suprascripto, in primis versu tertio dicendum: *Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum adnuntiabit laudem tuam.* [2]Cui subiungendus est tertius psalmus et gloria. [3]Post hunc, psalmum nonagesimum quartum cum antiphona, aut certe decantandum. [4]Inde sequatur ambrosianum, deinde sex psalmi cum antiphonas.

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IX: QUANTI PSALMI DICENDI SUNT NOCTURNIS HORIS

[1]Hiemis tempore suprascripto, in primis versu tertio dicendum: *Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum adnuntiabit laudem tuam.* [2]Cui subiungendus est tertius psalmus et gloria. [3]Post hunc, psalmum nonagesimum quartum cum antiphona, aut certe decantandum. [4]Inde sequatur ambrosianum, deinde sex psalmi cum antiphonas.

[5]Quibus dictis, dicto versu, benedicat abbas et, sedentibus omnibus in scamnis, legantur vicissim a fratribus in codice super analogium tres lectiones, inter quas et tria responsoria cantentur: [6]duo responsoria sine gloria dicantur; post tertiam vero lectionem, qui cantat dicat gloriam. [7]Quam dum incipit cantor dicere, mox omnes de sedilia sua surgant, ob honorem et reverentiam sanctae Trinitatis. [8]Codices autem legantur in vigiliis divinae auctoritatis, tam veteris testamenti quam novi, sed et expositiones earum, quae a nominatis et orthodoxis catholicis patribus factae sunt.

[9]Post has vero tres lectiones cum responsoria sua, sequantur reliqui sex psalmi, cum alleluia canendi. [10]Post hos, lectio apostoli sequatur, ex corde recitanda, et versus, et supplicatio litaniae, id est Kyrie eleison. [11]Et sic finiantur vigiliae nocturnae.

RB 9: HOW MANY PSALMS SHOULD BE SUNG AT THE NIGHT OFFICE?

1. In the previously defined winter season, first this verse is repeated three times: "Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise." 2. To this should be added Psalm 3 and the Gloria. 3. After this comes Psalm 94 with refrain, or at least sung. 4. The Ambrosian hymn follows, and six psalms with antiphons.

5. When these have been completed, the verse is sung, the abbot gives his blessing and all the monks sit down on the benches. Then the brothers should read in turn three lessons from the book on the lectern. Three responses should be sung in between the lessons. 6. Two responses should be said without Gloria, but after the third, the singer chants the Gloria. 7. When the chanter begins the Gloria, all must immediately rise from their seats out of respect and reverence for the Holy Trinity. 8. The books read at Vigils should have divine authority, whether from the Old or New Testament. The biblical commentaries of renowned and Orthodox Catholic Fathers may also be used.

9. After these three lessons with their responses, the six remaining psalms follow, to be sung with Alleluia. 10. The lesson of the Apostle follows these, and it is done by heart. Then comes the verse and litany of petition, which is Kyrie Eleison. 11. Thus ends the nocturnal Vigils.

RB 9 Notes

T

Night Office (nocturnis horis). Although Benedict calls the Night Office *vigiliae* in 8.3,4, here he calls it *nocturnae horae*. Likewise, *dicere*

(said) in the title is one of several terms Benedict uses interchangeably (with *canere, cantare, modulare, psallere*) for the performance of the choir Office. Probably the psalms were always chanted in a simple manner (Lentini, 174), so I will consistently use "sing." Manning, 48–51, says that this shifting vocabulary is typical of RB 8–18.

1.

previously defined (supra scripto), following Vogüé, 2.510. *Suprascripto* could mean merely "above-mentioned," but it is probably noted precisely to recall the parameters of the winter season as defined in RB 8.1.

Lord, open my lips (Domine, labia me aperies). The reference may be to the profound night silence which precedes the Night Office (RB 42). The triple repetition of Psalm 51:17 is also pronounced by the table-reader at his blessing (38.3). Other triple repetitions occur in 35.16-17 (table-waiters) and novices (58.22). The number three may be for the Trinity or merely for dramatic emphasis.

2.

to this (cui). Since this psalm is not mentioned in RB 43.3, which treats of the beginning of Vigils in the context of tardiness, nor is it included in the Master's scheme (32.12-13), it may be an interpolation (Vogüé, 2.511). No doubt Psalm 3 was chosen because of v. 6: "When I lie down to sleep, I wake again for the Lord sustains me" (NAB). The psalmist can sleep despite persecution, due to the Lord's protection (Lentini, 176). It can also be said that another psalm would stretch the time out further for latecomers.

Gloria (Gloria). The doxology to the Trinity was especially popular with the Orthodox party at the time of the Arian controversy, for it hymns the full divinity of Christ. It also christianizes the Old Testament psalms.

3.

refrain (cum antefana) probably means that the psalm is not sung straight through but is intercalated by the repetition by all of a pertinent verse from the psalm or the liturgical season. The matter is obscure enough to provoke scholarly controversy, e.g., Gindele, 2.171-222, who thinks "antiphon" means a group of three psalms, or Vogüé, 30.119-124, who thinks it is a refrain. In more recent times, monastic choirs have usually understood "antiphonally" to mean two alternating choirs. On the other hand, an "antiphon" is usually a text used at the beginning and end of a psalm. Scholars now incline to the view that the usual method of psalming in the earliest centuries of monasticism was to have a soloist chanting and the rest responding with a refrain

(see Dyer, 41-74). That is to say that the whole Office was often done in the manner Benedict prescribes for Psalm 94. For "antiphon," see N. Mitchell, *RB 1980,* 401–403; see *Index:* Antiphon.

or at least sung (aut certe decantandum). Most translators have it thus, but Lentini has "sung slowly" and Vogüé, "at least sung straight through." Nevertheless, I still assume that *all* psalms were sung. Lentini seems prejudiced by RB 43.3, and Vogüé bases his opinion on 17.6, where antiphons are contrasted to uninterrupted sung progress through the psalm.

4.

Ambrosian hymn (Ambrosianum). The Latin has simply "a/the Ambrosian," perhaps showing that St. Ambrose (+397) was so famous a composer of popular hymns that his name alone was sufficient to designate the whole genre. Benedict has added this element to the traditional Office of Vigils, and also to the other Offices. Caesarius of Arles, a contemporary of Benedict, also uses hymns in his Office (Lentini, 177). This may be seen as an indication of Benedict's openness to a broad range of liturgical influences, whether from the monastic milieu or the popular Church. See Kardong, 26.74.

six psalms (sex psalmi). Two Egyptian legends (Cassian, *inst.* 2.5; *vit. Pach.* 22) tell of how an angel of the Lord informed the monks that they were to limit themselves to twelve psalms at the Night Office. Cassian's point is that quality is more important than quantity in the matter of prayer. RB 9.1-8 refers only to the first nocturn (or section) of Vigils, which uses half the sum of the twelve psalms.

5.

the brothers (a fratribus). This is a change from the Master, who only has reading from a book at Sunday Vigils (44.9-11). Otherwise, the deans and abbot recite short lessons, presumably by heart (46.3-7). Reading from a book was difficult in ancient times, due to poor punctuation. It took special preparation (RB 8.3) and not everyone could perform this service (38.1). Nevertheless, Benedict seems to want as many people as possible to contribute to the liturgy. Lentini notes that the lessons were probably chanted in some fashion, which would also limit the number of persons capable of performing them. See *Index:* Brothers.

The verse is sung (dictu verso). A verse from a psalm is sung by a cantor and repeated by the choir as a transition to the lessons (Lentini, 178).

The abbot gives his blessing (abbas benedicat). Ancient commentators like Smaragdus said this blessing was given to the reader of the lessons, who formally petitioned for it. This custom was in fact followed at the

choir Office and in the refectory in most Benedictine monasteries up to recent times. See Lentini, 178; see *Index:* Bless.

sit down on the benches (sedentibus omnibus in scamnis). This implies the psalms were sung standing up, the ideal posture for good vocal performance. On the other hand, standing in one place for a long time is hard work for the heart: soldiers standing at parade attention often pass out. Hence an interval of sitting is appreciated.

benches (scamnis) are simple wooden furniture, probably meaning separate stools. All of this was previous to the elaborate carved choir stalls of the Middle Ages.

in the book on the lectern (in codice super analogium). At that time, there were no breviaries containing all the psalms and lessons. Monasteries today have by and large returned to the ancient practice of not providing texts of the lessons for each person in choir.

three responses (tria responsoria). Sung responses between the lessons have the effect of lending variety to the Office and involving the listeners. The abbot normally put an end to the lesson by saying: "You then (cease)." The reader would answer: "Lord, have mercy," to which the choir would conclude: "Thanks be to God." Lentini, 179.

6.

The singer chants (qui cantat dicat). Literally, "the chanter says," but Benedict uses many terms for the vocalization of the Divine Office and seems to do so indiscriminately (see note 8.4). In this translation we assume that virtually every word of the Office was chanted.

7.

respect and reverence (honorem et reverentiam). The same concept and symbolic gesture are repeated in 11.3. Benedict generally uses the term *honor* for the respect due to human persons, but in this text it is given to God. This may show that he means to anchor human rights in divine worship, which is clear enough in his utilization of Matthew 25 in RB 36 and 53. See 23.200-201. The word "reverence" is usually for God in RB (see note 6.7) but not exclusively. In 60.7; 63.12 and 65.12, the reference is humans. See *Index:* Honor, Reverence.

rise from their seats (de sedilia sua surgant). Much as a concert crowd rises to its feet after an extraordinary performance, so the monks are not to stay seated at the doxology. Although he does not mention it, they probably also bowed when they had arisen. The same ritual is observed today in many monasteries. The employment of physical gestures in the liturgy was characteristic of Catholicism from earliest times (see

the *orante* attitude of prayer depicted on the walls of the catacombs). The influence of the Reformation and the Enlightenment was to downplay the physical, and this has also been the drift of the recent renewal of Catholic liturgy. The danger is that simplification may leave our bodies with no more role in worship and we shall end up "talking heads," as sometimes happens on the TV screen.

Trinity (Trinitatis) is one of two mentions of the triune God by Benedict (see also 11.3). A. Borias, 6.6, calls this rubric to honor and reverence the Trinity "especially urgent," given the redoubled nouns. The Divine Office is but an intensification of the whole atmosphere of reverential awe with which Benedict wishes to envelope his monastery (see note 7.10). Holzherr, 140, says that Benedict increased the traditional number of Glorias in reaction to Arian troubles and "related theological controversies."

8.

authority (auctoritatis). The implication is that God is the ultimate author of the Bible, which derives its authority, along with the intrinsic excellence of its message, from this fact.

biblical commentaries (expositiones earum). Not just any patristic writings are to be used, but only those closely related to the biblical texts used in the same service. While almost all patristic writings are biblically oriented, they do not necessarily comment in the way we might expect. Their allegorical approach sometimes seems only vaguely connected with the biblical text, yet they almost always display a deep, intuitive grasp of the main biblical message. See *Index:* Scripture.

renowned and Orthodox Catholic (nominatis et orthodoxis catholicis patribus). Benedict lived in a time and place of doctrinal contestation, since the Gothic peoples surging into Italy from the north were Arian Christians and not Orthodox (Catholics). The term "renowned" could also be translated "certified," that is, by Church authority such as the Gelasian Decree of ca. A.D. 500 (Lentini, 181). Another possibility is "renowned for their orthodoxy" (Rochais). At any rate, generally respected writers should be used for public reading; more marginal or provocative ones can always be used for private *lectio*. If Benedict permits nonbiblical readings for public *lectio,* then he probably does not restrict private *lectio* to the biblical text alone. Benedict seems to be the first monastic legislator to have the Fathers read at the Office. The Roman Liturgy has never allowed nonbiblical readings at the Mass (Holzherr, 140). Today, some monasteries again read only biblical passages at the Office, perhaps in reaction to some of the bizarre hagio-

graphy and verbose modern writings that had crept into the monastic Office before 1970. See *Index:* Lectio Divina.

Since Benedict has virtually defined the monk as a "listener" from Prol 1 onward (see note at Prol 1), it is little wonder that he often portrays the community listening to the Bible read in public (see 4.55; 38.5). "The reading of Scripture and the Fathers belongs to the core of monastic life" (Holzherr, 140). See *Index:* Listen.

9.

remaining (reliqui) implies that Vigils always has twelve psalms (see note 9.4).

Alleluia (alleluia) was probably used as an antiphon at the beginning and end of this bloc of six psalms, but it may have been sung in refrain fashion (Lentini, 181).

10.

lesson of the Apostle (lectio apostoli). Probably a short reading from one of the Pauline letters, but it could also refer to Peter or one of the other New Testament writers, since all of them were considered "apostolic."

by heart (ex corde) implies that it was short and repeated so often as to be well known by all members of the choir by memory. The short lesson is not done at the lectern, nor do the listeners sit down. See *Index:* Heart.

litany of petition (supplicatio litaniae), literally, "petition of litany." In the early Church, "Lord, have mercy" *(Kyrie eleison)* was the refrain to prayers of petition. Later the refrain alone was used in the Mass and at the Office. Since the revision of the liturgy in recent decades, the pristine usage is often restored, but the simple refrain may still be used. Vogüé, 2.513, thinks Benedict used the short form, which already was the custom at Rome at that time (Gregory, *ep.* 9.26).

11.

Thus ends (sic finiantur). In fact, Vigils probably ended with a closing formula and blessing (Lentini, 183).

X: QUALITER AESTATIS TEMPORE AGATUR NOCTURNA LAUS

[1]A Pascha autem usque ad kalendas Novembres, omnis ut supra dictum est psalmodiae quantitas teneatur, [2]excepto quod lectiones in codice, propter brevitatem noctium, minime legantur, sed pro ipsis tribus lectionibus una de veteri testamento memoriter dicatur, quam brevis

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responsorius subsequatur. [3]Et reliqua omnia ut dictum est impleantur, id est ut numquam minus a duodecim psalmorum quantitate ad vigilias nocturnas dicantur, exceptis tertio et nonagesimo quarto psalmo.

RB 10: HOW THE NIGHT OFFICE SHOULD BE DONE IN SUMMERTIME

1. From Easter to November first, however, the number of psalms is maintained as stated above. 2. But the lessons in the book are not to be read, owing to the shortness of the nights. In place of three lessons, one Old Testament lesson is said by heart, and a brief response is added to it. 3. All the rest is performed as prescribed, that is, never fewer than the equivalent of twelve psalms must be sung at Night Vigils, not counting Psalms 3 and 94.

RB 10 Notes

T

Night Office (nocturna laus). This is a secondary title, as is evident by the *autem* (however) in 10.1 which shows that the material was originally connected to what precedes (RM 33.41). Benedict here uses his third synonymous title for Vigils: *vigiliae* (8.3) and *nocturnae horae* (9T). *Laus* is not to be confused with Lauds, the modern term for the prayer at daybreak.

2.

But the lessons (excepto quod lectiones), literally, "except that the lessons. . . ." The replacement of this subordinating conjunction allows us to shorten the sentence and eliminate Benedict's stylistic lapse: psalms and lessons are different categories.

not to be read (excepto . . .). Although the readings at Vigils are virtually eliminated, this does not mean the monks were cut off from the Bible. Scripture was read at table (38.5) and it was the staple of *lectio divina* (48.17-21). See Lentini, 184.

shortness of the nights (propter brevitatem noctium). If we agree with most commentators that RB was written in the environs of Rome, then the shortest nights would be about six hours long. Since the monks could not retire much before sundown (9 P.M.), they could hardly rise before 2 or 3 A.M. The lack of sleep would be compensated by a siesta (48.5), but a shorter Night Office also helped.

3.

never fewer than twelve (numquam minus a duodecim). In this matter,

RB departs from the Master, who reduces the summer psalms to nine (33.40). RB follows the Roman usage, which maintains the classic twelve psalms (Vogüé, 2.513).

XI: QUALITER DIEBUS DOMINICIS VIGILIAE AGANTUR

[1]Dominico die temperius surgatur ad vigilias. [2]In quibus vigiliis teneatur mensura, id est, modulatis ut supra disposuimus sex psalmis et versu, residentibus cunctis disposite et per ordinem in subselliis, legantur in codice, ut supra diximus, quattuor lectiones cum responsoriis suis. [3]Ubi tantum in quarto responsorio dicatur a cantante gloria; quam dum incipit, mox omnes cum reverentia surgant.

[4]Post quibus lectionibus sequantur ex ordine alii sex psalmi cum antiphonas sicut anteriores, et versu. [5]Post quibus iterum legantur aliae quattuor lectiones cum responsoriis suis, ordine quo supra.

[6]Post quibus dicantur tria cantica de prophetarum, quas instituerit abbas; quae cantica cum alleluia psallantur. [7]Dicto etiam versu et benedicente abbate, legantur aliae quattuor lectiones de novo testamento, ordine quo supra. [8]Post quartum autem responsorium incipiat abbas hymnum Te Deum laudamus. [9]Quo perdicto, legat abbas lectionem de Evangelia, cum honore et timore stantibus omnibus. [10]Qua perlecta, respondeant omnes Amen, et subsequatur mox abbas hymnum Te decet laus, et data benedictione incipiant matutinos.

[11]Qui ordo vigiliarum omni tempore tam aestatis quam hiemis aequaliter in die dominico teneatur. [12]Nisi forte—quod absit—tardius surgant: aliquid de lectionibus breviandum est, aut responsoriis. [13]Quod tamen omnino caveatur ne proveniat. Quod si contigerit, digne inde satisfaciat Deo in oratorio per cuius evenerit neglectum.

RB 11: HOW VIGILS SHOULD BE DONE ON SUNDAYS

1. On Sunday, they should rise earlier for Vigils. 2. In these Vigils the following order should be observed: first, six psalms and a verse should be sung, as we said before; then all should be seated on the benches in good order and by rank, and four lessons with their responsories are to be read in the book, as we said above. 3. Only at the fourth response is Gloria sung by the cantor. As soon as it begins, all immediately rise up in reverence.

4. After these lessons should follow in order six more psalms with antiphons as before, and the versicle. 5. After these, four lessons with their responses should be sung again, according to the arrangement given above.

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4. After these lessons should follow in order six more psalms with antiphons as before, and the versicle. 5. After these, four lessons with their responses should be sung again, according to the arrangement given above.

6. Then let three canticles from the prophets be sung, and these should be chosen by the abbot. These canticles should be sung with Alleluia. 7. Then, when the verse has also been sung and the abbot has given his blessing, four other lessons from the New Testament are read as arranged above.

8. After the fourth response, the abbot should intone the hymn Te Deum Laudamus. 9. When it has been sung through, let the abbot read the Gospel lesson while all stand out of respect and reverential awe. 10. When the Gospel reading is finished, all respond Amen, and the abbot should immediately begin the hymn *Te Decet Laus*. When he has given the blessing, let them begin Matins.

11. This arrangement for Sunday Vigils should be followed at all times, whether in summer or winter. 12 But if they should—God forbid!—happen to rise late, then some of the readings or responses should be shortened. 13. All precautions should be taken that this not happen. If it does happen, the one whose neglect caused it must make due satisfaction to God in the oratory.

RB 11 Notes

T

In RM 49, Sunday Vigils are celebrated according to the pattern of the original Paschal Vigil, namely, the monks stay up all night and only retire after Matins (Lauds) at daybreak. Cassian reports that the Egyptian monks kept an all-night vigil on both Friday and Saturday nights (*inst*. 3.8-9; Holzherr, 143). Benedict breaks with this tradition: his monks never stay up all night—and they never sleep through Sunday morning. Here again Benedict sides with the Roman Office, which had abandoned all-night vigils by the sixth century. See *Index:* Vigils.

1.

earlier (temperius). Presumably, the problem would only arise in summer, when the nights are shortest. Since Matins must occur at dawn, which would be about 3:30 A.M. on the shortest night, there would be need to rise earlier than the ordinary time—perhaps at 2 A.M.

2.

order (mensura). Another alternative interpretation would emphasize moderation in the quantity of psalms and lessons used in the service (*RB 1980*, Vogüé). A third opinion is that *some* set order and quantity should be observed (Lentini, 190). If there was general concern to limit the number of psalms to twelve (9.4), or to prevent the number from dropping below that number (10.3), the danger on Sunday would be excess, not defect. Still, since this verse introduces a

detailed description (11.2-13), it seems better to read *mensura* as "order." See *Index:* Measure.

in good order and by rank (disposite et per ordinem). Commentators point to this remark as typical of Benedict's Roman love for good order, but it is difficult to see why people should sit anywhere but in their own places.

four lessons (quattuor lectiones) as compared to three lessons on weekdays. Thus Benedict makes a gesture toward the all-night Vigil, which involved much greater numbers of psalms and lessons.

3.
Gloria (Gloria). As in 9.6-7 (see note), the Trinity is the object of utmost reverence, which is symbolized by rising to respectful attention. Here again, prompt rising is stressed; slovenliness would be a sign of disrespect (see RB 5; 43).

4.
as before (sicut anteriores). Both Vogüé, 2.515, and Steidle, 95, think the reference is to 9.9; the other possibility is that it means the first "nocturn" (11.2-3).

5.
arrangement given above (ordine quo supra). Probably a reference to 11.2, which asks for responses to each lesson, but Gloria Patri only with the final response.

6.
three canticles (tria cantica). At Jerusalem (ca. A.D. 385), Egeria reported a third nocturn of three more psalms (*peregr.* 24.9-10) but this would break the twelve-psalm rule. The Milanese Office, however, had three canticles, and may have been Benedict's model (see 9.4 for *Ambrosianum,* in honor of Ambrose and the hymns he was reputed to have written).

of the prophets (de Prophetarum). The word "books" is understood. This term was used loosely to include "all the poetic canticles (songs) of the Old Testament except for the psalms" (Lentini, 191).

chosen by the abbot (quas instituerit abbas). At this time, the canticles for Sunday Vigils were not yet fixed, as they were for Matins (13.8,10). This is reminiscent of recent times, when monastic communities are again free to ransack the Bible for suitable poetic materials.

7.
four other lessons (quattuor lectiones) making a total of twelve readings, equivalent to twelve psalms.

arranged as above (ordine quo supra). See 11.5 and its reference to 11.2.

Holzherr, 144, claims that Benedict's third nocturn is essentially a "popular, joyous celebration of the Resurrection, drawn from the parochial liturgies of the time at Jerusalem, Byzantium, Arles and Milan. In this matter, Benedict has introduced a usage unknown to the Master."

New Testament (de novo testamento). This must exclude the Gospel, which is to be read later. It also implies that the Old Testament is read earlier—probably in the first nocturn. That would leave the second nocturn for patristic readings (Lentini, 192).

8.

the abbot (abbas) now takes over as the chief actor of the third nocturn. This is doubtless done to lend an air of solemnity to the proceedings. Probably the idea is based on the liturgical tradition that Christ himself speaks in the Gospel, so the priest or deacon should read that lesson. In RB 2.2, the abbot is identified as the special agent of Christ in the monastery.

Te Deum Laudamus may have been composed by Bishop Nicetas of Remesiana about A.D. 400. By the time of Benedict, it was a popular hymn and erroneously attributed to St. Ambrose. Caesarius of Arles also decrees it to be sung by the choir of nuns at Sunday Vigils (*reg. virg.* 69).

the Gospel lesson (lectionem de evangelia) may mean the Gospel pericope for the given Sunday or it may be more general. If the latter, then the likelihood is that a resurrection passage was read. This is the case in Caesarius, *reg. virg*. 69, and it is also recorded by Egeria that the bishop read a Paschal Gospel at Vigils (*peregr*. 24.10). See Vogüé, 2.516; see *Index:* Gospel.

respect (honore). See note 9.7.

reverential awe (timore). See *Index:* Fear.

stand (stantibus) in honor of the solemnity of the occasion. See note 9.7.

Te Decet Laus is an ancient hymn, the text of which is given entirely in *Constitutiones Apostolicae* 7.48.

blessing (benedictione) could refer to the whole complex of little elements which normally close the hours of the Office. Or the author may wish to close this Office in the simplest manner because it ends with such solemn elements and Matins begins immediately (Lentini, 193).

let Matins begin (incipiant matutini). Since Sunday Vigils is so long, it is unlikely that the office at daybreak (Matins = Lauds) would follow di-

rectly without a break. In fact, 13.12 expressly requires that Matins (Ps 66) open slowly "as on Sunday" so that those who have gone out can make it back for Psalm 50 (Lentini, 193). The practice of back-to-back Offices is not favored by modern liturgists. The celebration of Sunday Vigils and Matins in the traditional manner could easily take ninety minutes.

11.
at all times (omni tempore). The order for weekday Vigils varies with the season (see RB 9 and 10), but on Sunday it remains the same, no matter what the season.

12.
shortened (breviandum). Since Matins must begin at daybreak, it cannot be delayed to make up for late rising. The problem would only arise on Sunday, and probably in summer (see note 10.2).

rise late (tardius surgant). For the notoriously difficult ancient problem of computing time at night, see note 8.4.

In RM 33.46-47, the Master arranges that when the Office must be shortened, it is to be done by eliminating the prayer-pauses. It is an interesting index of priorities to see which elements of the Office an author first eliminates when the Office must be abbreviated. Obviously, Benedict values the psalms more highly than the lessons. Lentini, 195, thinks time was gained by simplifying the responsorial chants, but Benedict does not hesitate to omit lessons on the short summer nights (10.2).

XII: QUOMODO MATUTINORUM SOLLEMNITAS AGATUR

[1]In matutinis dominico die, in primis dicatur sexagesimus sextus psalmus, sine antiphona, in directum. [2]Post quem dicatur quinquagesimus cum alleluia. [3]Post quem dicatur centesimus septimus decimus et sexagesimus secundus. [4]Inde benedictiones et laudes, lectionem de Apocalypsis una ex corde, et responsorium, ambrosianum, versu, canticum de Evangelia, litania, et completum est.

RB 12: HOW THE SOLEMNITY OF MATINS IS TO BE OBSERVED

1. At Sunday Matins, first let Psalm 66 be sung straight through without antiphon. 2. After that, the fiftieth Psalm should be sung with

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Alleluia. 3. Then come Psalms 117 and 62. 4. Then: Blessings and Praises, a lesson by heart from the Apocalypse, the responsory, hymn, verse, Gospel canticle, litany and it is finished.

RB 12 Notes

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According to Vogüé, 2.517, this title originally covered both RB 12 and 13. That is possible, since it does not mention Sunday. Matins is called *sollemnitas* on both Sunday and weekdays (13.1), so it must merit that title by its very nature. Perhaps this is so because Matins, not Vigils, was the official Morning Prayer of the Church. At any rate, it is more of an active celebration, whereas Vigils, at least on weekdays, is primarily a listening experience.

1.

Benedict's bare schema for Sunday Matins is based on the Roman Office of the time. It is marked by praise of the Creator, and Psalm 66 speaks of God's "face shin(ing) upon us." This reference to morning light is typical of the cathedral or parochial Office, which chooses psalms to match the hour of the day. See Lentini, 196. Although Benedict does not follow Sunday Matins as given in RM (35.1; 39.1-5; 45.12), he does share some terminology with the Master (Holzherr, 386).

straight through without antiphon (sine antiphona in directum). Yet even so, the psalm should be sung slowly (13.2), presumably so that those who have left the oratory have time to return.

the fiftieth Psalm (quinquagesimus), Psalm 51 in Hebrew numbering, is the famous *Miserere*. Even though Matins is primarily an Office of praise, an ancient custom found it necessary to sing this psalm of lament every morning, festal or ferial.

3.

Psalms 118 and 62 are also well chosen for Sunday Matins, since the former adumbrates the resurrection ("I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord": 118:17) and the latter longs for morning ("through the watches of the night I will meditate on you": 62:7).

4.

Blessings (benedictiones) is the traditional Latin term used for the Canticle of the Three Young Men (Dan 3:57-88).

Praises (laudes) refers to Psalms 148–150, the three concluding hymns of the Psalter. Eventually, the whole canonical hour of Matins acquired the name "Lauds." "Matins" was then transferred to Vigils.

a lesson . . . from the Apocalypse (lectionem de Apocalypsis). Lentini, 198, thinks the passage was Apocalypse 7:12: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever. Amen."

hymn (ambrosianum). Many of these compositions feature the risen Christ, so this element would greatly enhance the Christian theology of Matins. Benedict added the hymn to the Roman Matins; in fact, the Roman Liturgy entirely eschewed hymns before the twelfth century. See Lentini, 199.

Gospel canticle (canticum de evangelia). The *Benedictus* (Luke 1:68-79), besides expressing a piety suited for faithful, humble God-fearers *(anawim),* also contains verses suitable for morning: "He, the Day-spring, shall visit us in his mercy, to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (78-79). Holzherr, 368, says *evangelia* means "Gospel book," but Blaise (s.v.) does not agree. See *Index:* Gospel.

litany (litania). Here, unlike 9.10 (see note), the whole litany is said (Vogüé, 2.519).

XIII: PRIVATIS DIEBUS QUALITER AGANTUR MATUTINI

[1]Diebus autem privatis, matutinorum sollemnitas ita agatur, [2]id est, ut sexagesimus sextus psalmus dicatur sine antiphona, subtrahendo modice, sicut dominica, ut omnes occurrant ad quinquagesimum, qui cum antiphona dicatur. [3]Post quem alii duo psalmi dicantur secundum consuetudinem, id est: [4]secunda feria, quintum et tricesimum quintum; [5]tertia feria, quadragesimum secundum et quinquagesimum sextum; [6]quarta feria, sexagesimum tertium et sexagesimum quartum; [7]quinta feria, octogesimum septimum et octogesimum nonum; [8]sexta feria, septuagesimum quintum et nonagesimum primum; [9]sabbatorum autem, centesimum quadragesimum secundum et canticum Deuteronomium qui dividatur in duas glorias. [10]Nam ceteris diebus canticum unumquemque die suo ex prophetis sicut psallit ecclesia Romana dicantur. [11]Post haec sequantur laudes; deinde lectio una apostoli memoriter recitanda, responsorium, ambrosianum, versu, canticum de Evangelia, litania et completum est.

[12]Plane agenda matutina vel vespertina non transeat aliquando, nisi in ultimo per ordinem oratio dominica, omnibus audientibus, dicatur a priore, propter scandalorum spinas quae oriri solent, [13]ut conventi per

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ipsius orationis sponsionem qua dicunt: *Dimitte nobis sicut et nos dimittimus,* purgent se ab huiusmodi vitio. [14]Ceteris vero agendis, ultima pars eius orationis dicatur, ut ab omnibus respondeatur: *Sed libera nos a malo.*

RB 13: HOW MATINS ARE TO BE DONE ON ORDINARY DAYS

1. On ordinary days, however, the solemnity of Matins is to be done as follows: 2. Psalm 66 should be sung without an antiphon, drawing it out a little as on Sunday so that all might arrive for Psalm 50, which is sung with an antiphon. 3. After that, let two other psalms be sung according to custom, that is: 4. On Monday, Psalms 5 and 35; 5. on Tuesday, Psalms 42 and 56; 6. on Wednesday, Psalms 63 and 64; 7. on Thursday, Psalms 87 and 89; 8. on Friday, Psalms 75 and 91; 9. on Saturday, Psalm 142 and the Canticle of Deuteronomy, which is divided into two Glorias. 10. For each of the other days, they should sing the prophetic canticles that the Roman Church sings. 11. After these follow Praises; then one lesson from the Apostle to be said by heart, the responsory, hymn, verse, Gospel canticle, litany and it is finished.

12. But the celebration of Matins and Vespers must certainly never transpire without the superior concluding with the complete Lord's Prayer while all the rest listen. This is done because of the thorns of quarreling that often spring up. 13. When the brothers respond to the prayer: "Forgive as we forgive," they make a solemn pact to purge this vice from themselves. 14. But at the other Offices, only the last part of this prayer should be enunciated so that all may answer: "But deliver us from evil."

RB 13 Notes

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ordinary (privatis). Although OLD and Blaise do not suggest *privatus* can mean "ordinary," it must have acquired that meaning for sixth-century liturgy. Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 69, has the same term for the same subject. The idea is not just "weekdays" or "workdays" (Salzburg) but what used to be called *ferial* days: not Sundays, not feast days. "Ordinary time" in current liturgical parlance is the season outside of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter.

solemnity (sollemnitas). See note 12T.

2.

drawing it out a little as on Sunday (subtrahendo modice sicut dominica). Vogüé, 2.519, thinks that "as on Sunday" should go with "with-

out an antiphon." He conjectures that someone has interpolated "drawing it out a little" on the model of 43.4. In his favor is the fact that RB 12 does *not* say Psalm 66 should be protracted on Sunday. The words as they stand seem to say just that, but Vogüé inserts a comma between *modice* and *sicut*. Steidle, Salzburg and Holzherr agree with Vogüé; *RB 1980* and Lentini do not. Lentini, 200, regards the slight retardation of Psalm 66 as an effort to offset its direct progress, without antiphon.

according to custom (secundum consuetudinem) seems to mean the Roman Liturgy, which is mentioned explicitly in 13.10. That being the case, it is not surprising that the psalms appear to be chosen for some connection to light or resurrection (see note 12.1). The Roman Matins had two psalms between Psalm 50 and the canticle, but only one was variable (Vogüé, 2.519).

9.

Canticle of Deuteronomy (canticum Deuteronomium) must be Deuteronomy 32, a long hymn sung by Moses just before his death east of the Jordan.

10.

While it is remotely possible to read this verse to say merely that the monks should sing a canticle every day like the Roman Church (*RB 1980;* Holzherr?), the more obvious sense is that they should use the very same canticles as Rome. In fact, this was the case until Rome revised its Office under Pius X. See Lentini, 203. Strictly speaking, all these canticles are not from a prophet: 1 Samuel 2:1-10 (Wed.) and Exodus 15:1-10 (Thurs.) (Vogüé, 2.520). The other canticles are Isaiah 12:1-6 (Mon.); Isaiah 38:10-20 (Tues.); Habakkuk 3:1-19 (Fri.).

12.

Given the prestige of the *Pater Noster,* its use in the daily prayer of the early Church may be assumed. The Council of Gerona, Spain (A.D. 517) demanded it be said at morning and evening prayer. The curious custom of the superior alone reciting the main body of the prayer, with all joining in the conclusion asking and promising forgiveness, may be explained by a remark of Augustine (*serm*. 49.8). There he notes that some people omit the prayer for forgiveness, thinking they are thereby not obligated to it. Here, the whole body says *only* the final prayer. In *in Jo*. 26.11, Augustine also says the recitation of these words forgives lesser sins and prepares us for the Eucharist. See Lentini, 204.

Because the liturgical reforms of Vatican II demand that the entire congregation sing the *Pater* at Mass, this practice has become common among the monks at the Divine Office.

thorns of quarreling which often spring up (propter scandalorum spinas quae oriri solent). The image is very effective, for it puts emphasis on the constant potential for strife in a small, closed community, and the need for quick reconciliation. While *scandalum* (Greek: *skandalon*) usually means an obstacle to waylay the faithful Christian, it can occasionally mean a quarrel, as it does here (Blaise s v. 4).

solemn pact (conventi per . . . sponsionem). The basic meaning of the sentence in context seems clear: the community constantly pledges mutual forgiveness in the terms of the *Pater Noster*. This still leaves some question about the precise meaning of *conventi*. The strong sense, favored by most translators, is that the monks have *been* called together precisely to hear the word of God, which demands they forgive one another. By reciting this very word (the last part of the *Pater*), they make a solemn pact to do so. The weaker sense takes *conventi* as an active participle meaning to "agree."

The term *sponsio* for the last verse of the *Pater* was used by Cyprian (*domin. orat.* 23) and Augustine (*serm.* 56.13), two of Benedict's favorite authors. It means a reciprocal pact with God, admitting that God will only forgive us if we forgive one another. See Lentini, 207.

Forgive us as we forgive (Dimitte nobis sicut et nos dimittimus). For Benedict to emphasize this last part of the *Pater* is faithful to Scripture, for in Matthew's version, the author expands on the theme of forgiveness by means of a paraphrase (Matt 6:14-15).

14.
only the last part (ultima pars). Most translators add "only," without which the verse makes little sense. The traditional practice was (and is) for the superior to intone the first two words (Our Father), after which all bow in silent prayer. The silence is broken by the superior's "Lead us not into temptation," and completed by the response "but deliver us from evil."

XIV: IN NATALICIIS SANCTORUM QUALITER AGANTUR VIGILIAE

[1]In sanctorum vero festivitatibus, vel omnibus sollemnitatibus, sicut diximus dominico die agendum, ita agatur, [2]excepto quod psalmi aut antiphonae vel lectiones ad ipsum diem pertinentes dicantur; modus autem suprascriptus teneatur.

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RB 14: HOW VIGILS ARE TO BE DONE ON THE FEASTS OF THE SAINTS

1. On the feasts of the saints, however, and all solemnities, let it be done as arranged for Sundays, 2. except that the psalms, antiphons and lessons for that day should be said. But the quantity set down above must be maintained.

RB 14 Notes

T

This is a secondary title, at least to judge from the syntactic word *vero* (however) in v. 1. The paragraph was probably attached to RB 11, on Sunday Vigils. RM 45.12-15 discusses Sunday Vigils, and 16-18 treats Vigils on the feasts of saints. See Vogüé, 2.522. The title speaks of saints' days only, but the text includes all solemnities, presumably including feasts, of our Lord. According to Lentini, 207, the monks observed all the major Church feasts but attempted to keep the sanctoral cycle within reasonable limits. To judge from the monastic calendar before 1970, they were not very successful.

feasts of the saints (natalicis sanctorum), literally, "birthdays of the saints," but normally the date of the saint's death was commemorated as her birthday into eternal life.

Vigils (vigiliae). Probably Benedict only comments on sanctoral Vigils because in that Office alone are there significant changes in order and quantity.

2.

quantity (modus) could also be construed as "order." In both cases it refers to Sunday Vigils, to which festal Vigils are comparable. In time, though, feasts of various grades were introduced, some of which employed a less elaborate Office than that of Sunday.

XV: ALLELUIA QUIBUS TEMPORIBUS DICATUR

[1]A sanctum Pascha usque Pentecosten, sine intermissione dicatur alleluia, tam in psalmis quam in responsoriis. [2]A Pentecosten autem usque caput quadragesimae, omnibus noctibus, cum sex posterioribus psalmis tantum ad nocturnos dicatur. [3]Omni vero dominica extra quadragesima, cantica, matutinos, prima, tertia, sexta nonaque cum alleluia dicatur, vespera vero iam antiphona. [4]Responsoria vero numquam dicantur cum alleluia, nisi a Pascha usque Pentecosten.

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RB 15: THE SEASONS FOR ALLELUIA

1. From Holy Easter until Pentecost, Alleluia is sung without exception in both psalms and responsories. 2. From Pentecost to the beginning of Lent, however, it is to be sung every night but only with the six last psalms of Vigils. 3. On all Sundays outside Lent, however, the canticles, Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None are said with Alleluia. Vespers, though, has an antiphon. 4. But the responsories are never sung with Alleluia, except from Easter to Pentecost.

RB 15 Notes

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The Master (RM 45) uses Alleluia even more than Benedict, who uses it more frequently than the Great Church. RM 28.44-47 is also a very telling passage: "It is forbidden to fast from Easter to Pentecost because Easter Sunday closes the fast of sadness and opens the Alleluia of joy, whereas Pentecost Saturday closes the Alleluia and opens the fast. But Alleluia is closed for the churches, but in the monastery the servants of God, devoted as they are to the divine service in a special way, sing the Alleluia to the Lord in the manner set for the psalms until Epiphany."

RB 1980, 210, points out that Alleluia, a Hebrew term meaning "praise God," occurs four times in the celestial liturgy of Revelation 19. Perhaps then it is fair to say that the monastic liturgy "anticipates heaven." This corroborates the theme of the monk as an eschatological witness (see Hein, 318–324; Morley, 172–180). Many of the Hebrew psalms use Alleluia.

1.

While Alleluia was certainly used in the liturgy of the early Church, not too much was said about it. Augustine (s*erm.* 252.9) says the tradition was to use it only during Eastertide, but that some churches used it more often (*ep.* 55.32). The Greek Church had no qualms about using Alleluia even during penitential times. It seems, though, that the place of Alleluia was more controverted by the sixth century, so it is not surprising that Benedict devotes a separate (if tiny) chapter to it. See Lentini, 211.

without exception (sine interruptione), literally, "continuously," but it was merely an element added to the main body of the liturgy. Yet Benedict must mean it is the *only* antiphon used during Eastertide, whereas during "ordinary time" (v. 2), it is used more sparingly.

2.

Vigils (nocturnos). *Nocturni* is not Benedict's usual term for the

Night Office as it is for RM. Benedict usually calls it *Vigiliae*. Traditional Benedictine monasticism used the term "nocturn" to designate one major section of "Matins" (Vigils). For ordinary days there were two nocturns of six psalms each; on festal days there was added a third nocturn of canticles. "Three nocturn" offices had three sets of four lessons (= twelve). See *Index:* Vigils.

the canticles (cantica), here means the third nocturn of Vigils. *RB 1980* translates it simply with "Vigils," perhaps because the rest of the series consists of complete Hours of the Office.

XVI: QUALITER DIVINA OPERA PER DIEM AGANTUR

[1]Ut ait propheta, *septies in die laudem dixi tibi.* [2]Qui septenarius sacratus numerus a nobis sic implebitur, si matutino, primae, tertiae, sextae, nonae, vesperae completoriique tempore nostrae servitutis officia persolvamus, [3]quia de his diurnis horis dixit: *Septies in die laudem dixi tibi.* [4]Nam de nocturnis vigiliis idem ipse propheta ait: *Media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi.* [5]Ergo his temporibus referamus *laudes* Creatori nostro *super iudicia iustitiae* suae, id est matutinis, prima, tertia, sexta, nona, vespera, completorios, et *nocte surgamus ad confitendum* ei.

RB 16: HOW THE DIVINE OFFICE SHOULD BE PERFORMED DURING THE DAY

1. As the Prophet says, "Seven times a day I have praised you." 2. We will fulfill the sacred number of seven if we satisfy the duties of our service at the time of Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. 3. For, of these Day Hours he said: *"Seven times a day I have praised you."* 4. For the Prophet likewise says regarding the night Vigils: *"In the middle of the night I rose to praise you."* Therefore let us render *praise* to our Creator for *the judgments of his justice* at the following times: Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline and *let us rise at night to praise* him.

RB 16 Notes

T

Divine Office (divina opera) is one of many titles Benedict uses for the public prayer of the monks: *officia divina* (8T); *hora* (9T; 17T); *laus* (10T); *psallendi* (19T). The curious thing is that *opus Dei* is never used in RB 8–20, but everywhere else: 7.63; 22.6,8; 43T,3,6,10; 44.1,7; 47T,1; 50.3;

Night Office as it is for RM. Benedict usually calls it *Vigiliae*. Traditional Benedictine monasticism used the term "nocturn" to designate one major section of "Matins" (Vigils). For ordinary days there were two nocturns of six psalms each; on festal days there was added a third nocturn of canticles. "Three nocturn" offices had three sets of four lessons (= twelve). See *Index:* Vigils.

the canticles (cantica), here means the third nocturn of Vigils. *RB 1980* translates it simply with "Vigils," perhaps because the rest of the series consists of complete Hours of the Office.

XVI: QUALITER DIVINA OPERA PER DIEM AGANTUR

[1]Ut ait propheta, *septies in die laudem dixi tibi.* [2]Qui septenarius sacratus numerus a nobis sic implebitur, si matutino, primae, tertiae, sextae, nonae, vesperae completoriique tempore nostrae servitutis officia persolvamus, [3]quia de his diurnis horis dixit: *Septies in die laudem dixi tibi.* [4]Nam de nocturnis vigiliis idem ipse propheta ait: *Media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi.* [5]Ergo his temporibus referamus *laudes* Creatori nostro *super iudicia iustitiae* suae, id est matutinis, prima, tertia, sexta, nona, vespera, completorios, et *nocte surgamus ad confitendum* ei.

RB 16: HOW THE DIVINE OFFICE SHOULD BE PERFORMED DURING THE DAY

1. As the Prophet says, "Seven times a day I have praised you." 2. We will fulfill the sacred number of seven if we satisfy the duties of our service at the time of Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. 3. For, of these Day Hours he said: *"Seven times a day I have praised you."* 4. For the Prophet likewise says regarding the night Vigils: *"In the middle of the night I rose to praise you."* Therefore let us render *praise* to our Creator for *the judgments of his justice* at the following times: Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline and *let us rise at night to praise* him.

RB 16 Notes

T

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52.2,5; 58.7; 67.2,3. This has led some scholars, such as Manning, 2, and Renner, 45–74, to conclude that RB 8–20 is by a different hand than Benedict. See RB 8–20 Overview, B.2.

The title is misleading, for it suggests the chapter is about the manner of saying the Day Hours (Prime, Terce, Sext, None), whereas it actually discusses the biblical reasons why a certain number of Offices are held. The same material is given in RM 34, near the beginning of the Master's liturgical code. Benedict, for some reason, has deferred it to a later point in his liturgical material.

1.
As the Prophet says (ut ait propheta). The first verse seems to follow immediately from the title, showing that both are by the same author.

2.
seven (septenarius), literally, "sevenfold." In Psalm 118:164, seven means "many," as it does throughout the Bible. The tendency of Christians was to take this literally as in the seven sacraments, seven capital sins and so on. RM 38.2; 42.3; 43.2 all testify to the Master's reverence for the number seven. Probably the monks first developed the practice of praying seven times a day and only later sought scriptural justification for their custom. Moreover, "day" is used by the psalmist in the general sense, while Benedict takes it to mean the daylight hours.

As Cassian claims in *inst.* 2.1, the real point of praying seven times daily was not so much to match the biblical number, but to "pray always." In fact, Cassian looks down on the Bethlehem monks for having *any* set times for prayer, holding that the Egyptian, eremitical ideal of ceaseless prayer is the authentic monastic practice (*inst.* 3.1-3). See Holzherr, 150.

Prime (primae). Cassian (*inst.* 3.4) claims the Bethlehem monks invented this Office to prevent monks from returning to bed in the interval between Matins and Terce. After Vatican II, the Church suppressed Prime. In Benedict's time, Prime had only recently reached the West. Cassiodorus and Eugippius do not yet have it, though Caesarius does. Lentini, 215.

Terce, Sext and None (tertiae, sextae, nonae). These three Offices go back to the very early Church. They are mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus (Rome) and Tertullian (Carthage), so they were known over a wide expanse of territory. They are no doubt the result of a desire to praise the Lord at the major divisions of the Roman day. It was not hard, though, to find biblical events to legitimate those Offices, e.g., the crucifixion at the ninth hour. To judge from RB 48, Sext was al-

ways said at noon, but Terce and None were adjustable. These three Offices along with Prime are called "Little Hours," and are very short.

Vespers (vespera). Along with Matins, Vespers is the most solemn Office. One sign of this is the saying out loud of the *Pater Noster* (RB 13.12). Some authors use the term *lucernaria* (lamps), but Benedict never does. Perhaps that is because he wants Vespers always said in daylight (41.8).

compline (completorii) concludes the Day Hours, though it was said in the deep shadows of dusk. No doubt the same psalms (4,90 and 133) were always used (RB 18.19) so they could be sung by heart in the dark. Prayer at nightfall was already known by Basil and Chrysostom. Benedict probably adopted it from the Roman Office.

service (servitutis). This and *servitium* seem to be more than legal terms in RB. In Prol 45, service is tied to discipleship of the Lord Jesus, who is himself sometimes compared to the "Servant of Yahweh" (Isa 53). In RB 53.5, the monks "serve" the guest out of love for Christ. In 19.3, reverential worship is called service. The Office is called *servitutis pensum* in 50.4 (Roth, 119–133; A. Butler, 175–185; 54–57). See *Index:* Service.

Holzherr, 151, says that the "Hours" for prayer first developed in cathedral monasteries and therefore always had a connection with the Great Church. When the cenobitic monks performed them, they were adding the ecclesiastical work *(pensum)* of the Church to their manual labor. Although Holzherr offers no proof for this assertion, it certainly is a view that prevailed in medieval and modern Benedictine monachism, especially in its more clericalized forms. Before the Divine Office could be renewed after Vatican II, the notion of the Office as work for the Church had to be scuttled. It is first of all prayer for those involved in it; only when they experience it as true prayer can it be said to be a service to others.

4.

for (nam) is meant to be a logical continuation of what precedes. Since he has supplied seven Hours for the Day Office, Benedict is free to apply Psalm 118:62 to Vigils. RM 33.1 uses the same text to "prove" that Vigils should be prayed precisely at midnight. Benedict uses it in a more general sense, for Vigils are to be prayed later.

5.

Prime (prima). Vogüé, 2.525, thinks the list is repeated to insist on Prime, which was controverted at that time (Cassian, *inst.* 3.4-5). See Vogüé, 31.1-5. Various monastic authors arrive at the number of Hours in different ways. Cassian seems to arrive at seven by joining Vigils and

Matins, arguing for Prime. *Ordo mon.,* Eugippius and Cassiodorus do not have Prime at all. Since the number eight was of no symbolic significance for the Bible, one would only be able to find a proof text for seven.

for the judgments of his justice (super judicia justitiae suae) is a stock phrase, used in both Psalms 118:62 and 164 quoted here. Benedict no doubt used it to mean all the good things of God. In OT jargon, "justice" means more than a judicial process. Rather, it refers to all mighty acts performed by Yahweh on behalf of his covenant partner, Israel. See *Index:* Justice.

5.

Creator (creatori nostri). Here, if anywhere, the Rule presents the monk as a priest of the whole creation, rendering praise to the One who is the origin of all things.

XVII: QUOT PSALMI PER EASDEM HORAS CANENDI SUNT

[1]Iam de nocturnis vel matutinis digessimus ordinem psalmodiae; nunc de sequentibus horis videamus.

[2]Prima hora dicantur psalmi tres singillatim et non sub una gloria, [3]hymnum eiusdem horae post versum *Deus in adiutorium* antequam psalmi incipiantur. [4]Post expletionem vero trium psalmorum recitetur lectio una, versu et Kyrie eleison et missas.

[5]Tertia vero, sexta et nona, item eo ordine celebretur oratio, id est versu, hymnos earundem horarum, ternos psalmos, lectionem et versu, Kyrie eleison et missas. [6]Si maior congregatio fuerit, cum antiphonas, si vero minor, in directum psallantur.

[7]Vespertina autem synaxis quattuor psalmis cum antiphonis terminetur. [8]Post quibus psalmis, lectio recitanda est; inde responsorium, ambrosianum, versu, canticum de Evangelia, litania, et oratione dominica fiant missae.

[9]Completorios autem trium psalmorum dictione terminentur. Qui psalmi directanei sine antiphona dicendi sunt. [10]Post quos hymnum eiusdem horae, lectionem unam, versu, Kyrie eleison, et benedictione missae fiant.

RB 17: HOW MANY PSALMS ARE TO BE SUNG AT THESE HOURS

1. We have already arranged the order of the psalmody for Vigils and Matins; now let us look at the hours that follow.

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RB 17: HOW MANY PSALMS ARE TO BE SUNG AT THESE HOURS

1. We have already arranged the order of the psalmody for Vigils and Matins; now let us look at the hours that follow.

2. At Prime, the psalms should be sung separately and not under one Gloria. 3. The hymn for this hour should be sung after the verse "God, come to my assistance" and before the psalms. 4. After the completion of three psalms, a single lesson should be recited, the verse, "Lord, have mercy," and the dismissal.

5. Let the Office at Terce, Sext and None be celebrated in the same way: that is, the verse, the hymn for each hour, a bloc of three psalms, the lesson and verse, "Lord, have mercy," and the dismissal. 6. If the community is rather large, let the psalms be sung with antiphons, but straight through if it is small.

7. Let the Vesper Office, however, be limited to four psalms with antiphons. 8. After these psalms, the lesson should be read; then the response, hymn, verse, Gospel canticle, litany; and it is completed by the Lord's Prayer.

9. At Compline, only three psalms are to be sung, and they are to be done straight through, without an antiphon. 10. After these, the hymn for this hour should be sung, then a single lesson, verse, Kyrie Eleison, and let it end with a blessing.

RB 17 Notes

2.

Prime (prima hora) is treated separately from the remaining Little Hours because they have the three psalms under one Gloria (*ternos:* 17.5).

3.

It appears that the logical order here is disturbed, with the psalms discussed before that which precedes them. It could be that v. 3 was added later (Vogüé, 2.527). But it could also be that Benedict was anxious to counter a tendency to shorten the psalms of Prime (RM 33.53; Lentini, 221), so he discussed them first.

4.

a single lesson (lectio una). Doubtless a short lesson, probably recited by memory as in 13.11.

dismissal (missas). This term could be used variously. The most prominent usage, obviously, is for the Mass or Holy Eucharist. Whether Benedict ever mentions the Mass is a matter of scholarly dispute, with Steidle, 101, and Lentini in the affirmative. The latter points to RB 35.14; 38.2 and perhaps 60.4 as cases where *missa* means the Mass. At the Mass itself, the dismissal verse "Ite, missa est," shows that *missa* can have another meaning: "You are dismissed." This is the meaning in 17.4,5,8 and 10. See *RB 1980,* 410–412. See *Index:* Missas.

Prime gradually came to include the martyrology, commemoration of the dead, reading of the Rule, daily culpa and so forth. These additions were usually carried out in the chapter room. Because they are considered so important to the community life, some monasteries have retained Prime, even though the Church has officially suppressed that Office. See Lentini, 222.

5.

Office (oratio). *Oratio* normally means "prayer," but here it refers to the whole Office. As such, it can be added to the list of words Benedict uses for the Office (see note 16T).

6.

straight through (in directum). The Master only permits psalms without antiphons in emergencies where the Office must be abbreviated (RM 33.46-47; 55.7).

if the community is small (si vero minor). Presumably such a community would not have the vocal resources needed for the antiphons, which were usually more elaborate than the psalms.

7.

Office (sinaxis). Another term for the Office (see note 16T), this time drawn from the Greek world, where it could mean any gathering, but was also a technical term for the Divine Office (see Pachomian literature, passim; Cassian, *conf.* 8.16; 9.16). Vogüé, 2.527, says it is used here to give Vespers a solemn status. *Synaxis* is the oldest word for a Christian assembly (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 7:5).

limited (terminetur). Benedict shortens the Vespers of RM, which had six psalms (RM 41.1-2) and the Roman Office, which had five.

8.

Gospel canticle (canticum de evangelia). Vespers concludes just like Matins (RB 12; 13), but the Gospel canticle for the evening service is the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55).

by the Lord's prayer (oratione dominica). Some mss have these words in the nominative case and they can be read to say that Vespers concludes with the *Pater Noster* and a collect prayer *(missae fiant).* Lentini, 233, says that before the twelfth century, the *Pater Noster* substituted for the collect.

litany (litania). This is probably the full litany, like that used at Matins, and not just the abbreviated Kyrie Eleison of the other hours. It is fitting that intercessions for the whole Church be said at this Office

and at Matins, for these were the most important prayer periods in the ancient cathedrals and parish churches (Holzherr, 155).

9.

only three psalms (trium psalmorum . . . terminentur). Although he does not translate the verb literally, Lentini, 224, recognizes that brevity is an issue at Compline. That is so not only because it is the end of the day, but also because of the long reading that precedes Compline (RB 42).

10.

hymn (hymnum). Only at Compline does the hymn come in this position.

blessing (benedictione). Probably the blessing was the traditional one starting with *"Visita . . . "* (Lentini, 225).

Traditionally, Compline has been bolstered by the addition of certain elements. Typically, the Rule of Benedict is read at the beginning and a Marian hymn sung at the close. Some communities sing a Gospel canticle (usually *Nunc dimittis:* Luke 2:29-35) and the abbot performs the *asperges*. The Master has an even more complex Compline (RM 37; 42), with antiphons and the "Gospel."

XVIII: QUO ORDINE IPSI PSALMI DICENDI SUNT

[1]In primis dicatur versu *Deus in adiutorium meum intende, Domine ad adiuvandum me festina,* gloria, inde hymnum uniuscuiusque horae.

[2]Deinde, prima hora dominica, dicenda quattuor capitula psalmi centesimi octavi decimi; [3]reliquis vero horis, id est tertia, sexta vel nona, terna capitula suprascripti psalmi centesimi octavi decimi dicantur. [4]Ad primam autem secundae feriae, dicantur tres psalmi, id est primus, secundus et sextus; [5]et ita per singulos dies ad primam usque dominica dicantur per ordinem terni psalmi usque nonum decimum psalmum, ita sane ut nonus psalmus et septimus decimus partiantur in binos. [6]Et sic fit ut ad vigilias dominica semper a vicesimo incipiatur.

[7]Ad tertiam vero, sextam nonamque secundae feriae, novem capitula quae residua sunt de centesimo octavo decimo, ipsa terna per easdem horas dicantur. [8]Expenso ergo psalmo centesimo octavo decimo duobus diebus, id est dominico et secunda feria, [9]tertia feria iam ad tertiam, sextam vel nonam psallantur terni psalmi a centesimo nono decimo usque centesimo vicesimo septimo, id est psalmi novem. [10]Quique psalmi semper usque dominica per easdem horas itidem repetantur, hymnorum

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nihilominus, lectionum vel versuum dispositionem uniformem cunctis diebus servatam. [11]Et ita scilicet semper dominica a centesimo octavo decimo incipietur.

[12]Vespera autem cotidie quattuor psalmorum modulatione canatur. [13]Qui psalmi incipiantur a centesimo nono usque centesimo quadragesimo septimo, [14]exceptis his qui in diversis horis ex eis sequestrantur, id est a centesimo septimo decimo usque centesimo vicesimo septimo et centesimo tricesimo tertio et centesimo quadragesimo secundo; [15]reliqui omnes in vespera dicendi sunt. [16]Et quia minus veniunt tres psalmi, ideo dividendi sunt qui ex numero suprascripto fortiores inveniuntur, id est centesimum tricesimum octavum et centesimum quadragesimum tertium et centesimum quadragesimum quartum; [17]centesimus vero sextus decimus, quia parvus est, cum centesimo quinto decimo coniungatur. [18]Digesto ergo ordine psalmorum vespertinorum, reliqua, id est lectionem, responsum, hymnum, versum vel canticum, sicut supra taxavimus impleatur.

[19]Ad completorios vero cotidie idem psalmi repetantur, id est quartum, nonagesimum et centesimum tricesimum tertium.

[20]Disposito ordine psalmodiae diurnae, reliqui omnes psalmi qui supersunt aequaliter dividantur in septem noctium vigilias, [21]partiendo scilicet qui inter eos prolixiores sunt psalmi et duodecim per unamquamque constituens noctem.

[22]Hoc praecipue commonentes ut, si cui forte haec distributio psalmorum displicuerit, ordinet si melius aliter iudicaverit, [23]dum omnimodis id attendat ut omni hebdomada psalterium ex integro numero centum quinquaginta psalmorum psallantur, et dominico die semper a caput reprehendatur ad vigilias. [24]Quia nimis inertem devotionis suae servitium ostendunt monachi qui minus a psalterio cum canticis consuetudinariis per septimanae circulum psallunt, [25]dum quando legamus sanctos patres nostros uno die hoc strenue implesse, quod nos tepidi utinam septimana integra persolvamus.

RB 18: IN WHAT ORDER SHOULD THE PSALMS BE SUNG?

1. First of all, sing the verse "God, come to my help. Lord, hasten to help me." Then comes the Gloria and hymn for each hour.

2. Then at Sunday Prime, four sections of Psalm 118 are to be sung. 3. At the remaining hours, that is, Terce, Sext and None, three sections of the aforesaid Psalm 118 should be sung. 4. Prime on Monday, three psalms are to be sung: Psalms 1,2 and 6. And so at Prime for each day until Sunday, three psalms must be sung in order, up to Psalm 19. But

Psalms 9 and 17 should be divided into two parts. 6. In this way, Sunday Vigils may always begin with Psalm 20.

7. At Terce, Sext and None of Monday, the nine parts of Psalm 118 which remain, three at each hour. 8. Thus Psalm 118 will be used up in two days, that is, Sunday and Monday. 9. On Tuesday at Terce, Sext and None, Psalms 119 to 127 should be sung, totaling nine psalms. 10. These same psalms are to be repeated each day until Sunday; likewise, for all days the arrangement of the same hymns, lessons and verses should be maintained. 11. And so Psalm 118 will always begin on Sunday.

12. Four psalms should be sung in a festal manner every day at Vespers. 13. These psalms should begin with Psalm 109 and run through Psalm 147, 14. with the exception of those that have been set aside for use at the other hours, namely Psalms 117 through 127, as well as Psalm 133 and Psalm 142. 15. All the rest should be sung at Vespers. 16. Because this leaves us three psalms short, the longer psalms in the series mentioned above should be divided; namely, Psalms 138, 143 and 144. 17. Because Psalm 116 is short, it should be joined to Psalm 115. 18. This completes the ordering of the Vesper psalms; as for the rest, namely, readings, responses, hymns, verses and canticles, it should be carried out as we set down above.

19. At daily Compline, however, the same psalms are repeated.

20. Once the order of the psalms for the daylight hours (Offices) has been established, all the remaining psalms should be divided equally among the seven nights of Vigils. 21. This means that the longer psalms should be divided so that twelve sections are sung every night.

22. We want to make this perfectly clear: if this distribution of the psalms displeases anyone, they should arrange them as they see fit. 23. But whatever is done, be careful that the full number of 150 psalms is sung, and the cycle must begin anew at Vigils on Sunday. 24. For those monks who sing less than the Psalter with its customary canticles in a week's time are sluggards in the performance of their devotion. 25. Since we read that our holy fathers performed the whole Psalter with great labor in one day, let us at least do so in a whole week, despite our tepidity.

RB 18 Notes

T

In what order (Quo ordine). In this chapter, which has no counterpart in RM, Benedict establishes a precise arrangement for singing the entire Psalter over the course of a week. The scheme does not include Matins and Compline, which have their own psalms appropriate to morning and evening. The method is an innovation, for earlier Rules

simply employ a "running Psalter," which takes the psalms one after another. The scheme is as follows: Psalms 1–19: Prime; Psalms 20–108: Vigils; Psalms 109–117; 128–147: Vespers; Psalms 118–127: Little Hours. The counting starts with Prime on Sunday. See Lentini, 226.

1.

First of all (In primis). Some mss have "always in the Day Hours," and this is implied in the translation of *RB 1980*. In fact, only the Day Hours begin in this fashion in the Rule.

God, come to my help (Deus in adjutorium meum intende). Cassian made this verse of Psalm 69 famous by claiming that it is the ideal invocation to make us aware of the presence of God (*conf.* 10.10).

Holzherr, 160, calls *Deus in adjutorium meum intende* an "epiklesis (calling down) of the Holy Spirit on the praying community and on each individual in it." This psalm verse is a candid admission that we do not know how to pray, but need the Holy Spirit to pray within us (Rom 8:26). To use the psalms is another means of supplying our lack in the matter of prayer.

2.

sections (capitula). A "section" means eight verses of this very long psalm. The psalm itself is divided in this way, with each section beginning with a successive letter of the twenty-two-letter Hebrew alphabet. Prime on Sunday has four sections because one section remains over when Benedict divides the twenty-two sections by seven.

5.

divided in two parts (partiantur in binos). Here Benedict differs from the Master and the Roman Office, which do not divide long psalms. Cassian, however, recommends dividing them (*inst.* 2.11,1-2; Vogüé, 2.530).

9.

Psalms 119–127 are the first nine of the fifteen psalms traditionally called "gradual." The term may stem from their use by Jews walking *(gradior)* to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. These psalms are short and thus easily memorized for recitation of the Little Hours in the fields during work. Lentini, 229.

10.

but for all days (nihilominus . . . cunctis diebus). This puzzling adversative, which all other translators treat as a positive, is seen by Lentini, 230, to control "all days." That is, the same psalms are re-

peated at Terce, Sext and None Tuesday through Saturday, but the other elements of the Office are identical *every* day. He admits, though, that *nihilominus* can mean "likewise" in Late Latin.

the same arrangement . . . should be maintained (dispositionem uniformem . . . servatam). This accusative absolute is the only one found in RB. Although the construction was common in Late Latin, it was not used in classical style. Probably the existence of the construction in RB 18 is a clue that the chapter was written by someone besides Benedict.

12.

in a festal manner (modulatione). Vogüé, 2.531, thinks the term means "with antiphons." Certainly it refers to musical elaboration of some kind. Those translators who think, as I do, that the psalms were always sung in some fashion, will see this term as a reference to more complex music. Those who think recitation was the norm will think in terms of plain singing in this verse.

The series of Psalms 109–147 was also used in the Milanese and Roman liturgies for Vespers. Psalms 148–150 are used for Matins.

14.

Of the thirty-nine psalms involved in the series, thirteen are "exceptions" used at other Offices: Psalm 118: Matins of Sunday; Psalm 119: Little Hours of Sunday and Monday; Psalms 119–127: Little Hours of other days; Psalm 133: Compline; Psalm 142: Matins of Saturday.

16.

Vespers needs twenty-eight psalms. Because the tiny Psalm 116 is amalgamated with Psalm 115, this leaves twenty-five, or three short. The deficit is recouped by dividing in two Psalms 138, 143 and 144.

longer (fortiores). Vogüé has "more important," but Lentini notes that *fortior* can mean "longer" in Late Latin.

17.

joined (conjugatur). Not only does the Master prohibit the division of psalms, but also their joining (RB 33.42-45).

18.

completes the ordering (Digesto . . . ordine). The same terms are used in 17.1 for Vigils and Lauds.

laid down above (supra taxavimus) refers to 17.7-8 and not the order of the Little Hours set down in 18.10-11. Whether or not the non-psalmic parts of Vespers also remained the same every day, as for the Little Hours, is not clear from the text. But given the elaborate nature

of the psalmody at Vespers, it is not likely that the rest of it would have been merely repeated. See notes on 17.7-8.

20.

the remaining (reliqui omnes . . . qui supersunt) is a double pleonasm, not rendered in the translation: "all the remaining ones which are left over." In fact, RB 8–18 are full of grammatical and stylistic anomalies.

22.

make . . . perfectly clear (commonentes). The root meaning of *moneo* is to warn, but the first point Benedict makes is concessive: the cursus may be rearranged. Yet the main burden of vv. 23-25 is that it may not be shortened. *Commonentes* is a nominative absolute, seen only once elsewhere in RB at 7.14 (Vogüé, 2.534).

These verses sum up the whole chapter and not just the topic immediately preceding. In v. 22, Benedict exhibits a magnanimous and humble spirit which does not assume that it has created an ideal arrangement for all times and places. Throughout most of subsequent Benedictine history, monasteries have been content to follow his arrangement quite literally. But since Vatican II, many abbeys have developed different psalm arrangements. See Rooney, 403–431.

23.

But whatever is done (omnimodis). The point is not to begin with a certain psalm, but to begin the entire cycle of 150 psalms at Sunday Vigils.

24.

performance of their devotion (devotionis suae servitium). Vogüé, 2.534, calls this a genitive of identity, with both words meaning virtually the same thing. Lentini, 235, says: "An expression to indicate the act by which one manifests service to God, to whom it was freely and cheerfully vowed." See *Index:* Service.

monks (monachi). This is the first time the Rule has used "monk" in the sense of stating responsibilities and duties (Vogüé, 2.534). It is virtually a definition.

sluggards (nimis inertem) is a highly provocative word, aimed at correcting an abuse the author abhors, namely, reducing the number of psalms said each week. Strictly speaking, *inertem* modifies *servitium:* sluggish performance.

25.

we read (legamus). Apparently the author read the story in *vit. patr.*

5.4.57, but the practice is presented there as exceptional and not the regular custom. Since Benedict is engaged in something of a harangue here, one shouldn't begrudge him a bit of pious exaggeration.

since (dum quando). Lentini thinks this is an adversative clause, but he then interprets *utinam* ("let us") very weakly. If the main clause is to be strongly hortative, then the dependent clause ought to be causal: "since we read . . . let us at least."

Lentini, 236, greatly admires the rhythm and sonority of vv. 24-25, noting that they come as a welcome relief after the colorlessness and chaotic grammar of the Liturgical Code (RB 8–18). I would protest, though, that 24-25 are two of the most grammatically incoherent verses in the Rule.

XIX: DE DISCIPLINA PSALLENDI

[1]Ubique credimus divinam esse praesentiam et *oculos Domini in omni loco speculari bonos et malos,* [2]maxime tamen hoc sine aliqua dubitatione credamus cum ad opus divinum assistimus.

[3]Ideo semper memores simus quod ait propheta: *Servite Domino in timore,* [4]et iterum: *Psallite sapienter,* [5]et: *In conspectu angelorum psallam tibi.* [6]Ergo consideremus qualiter oporteat in conspectu divinitatis et angelorum eius esse, [7]et sic stemus ad psallendum ut mens nostra concordet voci nostrae.

RB 19: THE PROPER MANNER OF SINGING THE PSALMS

1. We believe that God is present everywhere and that *the eyes of the Lord gaze everywhere on the good and bad.* 2. We should, though, be totally convinced that this is so when we are present at the Divine Office.

3. Therefore let us remember what the Prophet says: *Serve the Lord in fear,* 4. and again: *Sing wisely,* 5. and: *I will sing to you in the presence of the angels.* 6. So let us be careful how we behave in the sight of God and his angels. 7. And let us stand to sing in such a way that our mind is in harmony with our voice.

RB 19 Notes

T

proper manner (disciplina). This word appears frequently in RB, but

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RB 19 Notes

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usually in reference to punishments. Although it normally pertains to external behavior, the content of RB 19 makes it clear that here it refers to both external conduct and internal attitude. This chapter is a condensed version of RM 47, which contains some disgusting material that Benedict does well to omit.

singing the psalms (psallendi). Strictly speaking, RB 19 is not restricted to either psalms or singing, but the whole comportment of the participants in the Divine Office. As Lentini, 241, puts it, the preceding chapters (8–18) establish the body of the Office, while RB 19 deals with its soul.

1.

Verses 1-2 are an introduction original to Benedict, who has discussed the same themes several times previously: omnipresence of God, God as all-seeing judge; fear of the Lord; memory and mindfulness. See notes 4.44-63; 7.10-14,26-30. Even though the other passages indicate the influence of Basil, this passage seems to draw from Cyprian, *domin. orat.* 4 (Vogüé, 2.535).

we believe (credimus) is an expression of religious faith and not a mere politeness such as "we think. . . ." The whole argument of RB 19 rests on faith in God, since there is no other reason to pray the Divine Office. The repetition of *credere* in the next verse reinforces the point that this chapter is about the essence of worship, namely, reverential awe of the Holy One. See *Index:* Faith.

The eyes of the Lord (Oculos Domini). Benedict quotes the same passage from Proverbs 15:3 in RB 7.26, so it must have been a favorite of his. It is noteworthy how often "eyes" appear in RB, and especially in the cluster of passages we noted above: 4.47; 7.10,26; 19.1. The eyes are the focus of much of the emotion of the person. Of course, the watchful gaze of the Divine Judge can be disconcerting, but it is also a reassuring, vigilant presence that shows that God is by no means dead but fully present to us when we cry out to God (see note on Prol 18). See *Index:* Eye.

2.

we are present (adsistimus). The temptation is to translate this verb as "participate," because that is what we want people to do at Office. But *adsistere* is less active than that. Perhaps it balances the idea of God's "presence." There may also have been a passive, contemplative tone to the ancient Office that was lost in subsequent centuries (see Overview, A.2).

We should, however, be totally convinced (Maxime tamen hoc sine alique dubitatione credamus). The Latin is so vehement that it is hard

to translate without seeming to caricature it. The argument is of the type called *a fortiori:* "If X is so, then all the more should Y be so."

Divine Office (opus divinum). The term "divine" means the same as "of God," but has much less bite. Its appearance three times in this chapter (19.1,2,6) gives it a somewhat abstract flavor, but that is exactly the opposite of what is intended: Remember that the living God is present at the Divine Office. It is a matter of a person, not a thing. See *Index:* Office.

3.

remember (memores). Like "believe" in the previous verse, this is not a throwaway word. Indeed, the importance of "mindfulness" for a monk can hardly be exaggerated. See *Index:* Forgetting.

fear (timore) is not what the modern person hopes to experience in the liturgy. Perhaps a better translation would be "reverential awe," which was the dominant tone of the Catholic liturgy before 1970. See *Index:* Fear.

4.

wisely (sapienter) means that one should have the good sense to behave reverently at the Office, but it could also be taken as proleptic of the need for concentration that comes up in 19.7. The Hebrew of Psalm 47:8 merely says: "Sing praises with a psalm" (RSV). See *Index:* Wisdom.

5.

angels (angeli) can be thought of as a heavenly choir with whom the monks join in praising God (Lentini, 240). But more likely the angels are meant here as agents of surveillance, as they are in the associated texts 7.13 and 7.28. See note 7.28. The Hebrew of Psalm 138:1 has *elohim,* which can also mean "gods." The note in NAB suggests that the psalmist is singing to Yahweh *despite* the other gods.

6.

be careful (consideremus) is quoted from L. Eberle's translation of RM 47.9. The more general meaning would be "ponder carefully," but the author has already made his point that we ought to behave very reverently in the Divine Office, so there is no question about that.

7.

let us stand and sing in such a way (stemus ad psallendum ut). *Stare* (stand) could simply be an auxiliary verb as in modern Italian, or it could refer to the proper way to stand in choir. Vogüé, 2.537, has "stand upright" but Lentini, 241, merely has "celebrate."

our mind in harmony with our voice (mens nostra concordet voci nostrae). Vogüé, 2.536, calls this a commonplace and Lentini cites Augustine, *ep.* 211.7 and *in Ps.* 30, as typical patristic sources. Because the monk is singing from the inspired text of Sacred Scripture in the psalmody, the "voice" is primary and the mind must follow. This is by no means easy, though, since the text of psalms is often obscure and shifts from mood to mood. It is doubtful whether strict attention to every sung word is what is asked for here.

XX: DE REVERENTIA ORATIONIS

[1]Si, cum hominibus potentibus volumus aliqua suggerere, non praesumimus nisi cum humilitate et reverentia, [2]quanto magis Domino Deo universorum cum omni humilitate et puritatis devotione supplicandum est. [3]Et non in multiloquio, sed in puritate cordis et compunctione lacrimarum nos exaudiri sciamus. [4]Et ideo brevis debet esse et pura oratio, nisi forte ex affectu inspirationis divinae gratiae protendatur. [5]In conventu tamen omnino brevietur oratio, et facto signo a priore omnes pariter surgant.

RB 20: REVERENCE IN PRAYER

1. When we wish to propose something to powerful people, we do not presume to do so without humility and reverence. 2. How much more should we petition the Lord God of the universe with great humility and total devotion.

3. We should also realize that it is not in much talking that we shall be heard, but in purity of heart and tearful compunction. 4. Therefore prayer should be short and pure, unless perhaps it be prolonged under the inspiration of divine grace. 5. But in community, prayer should be very brief. When the superior gives the signal, all should rise together.

RB 20 Notes

T

reverence (reverentia) is part of Benedict's regular vocabulary, signifying the worshipful adoration owed by the creature to the Creator of the universe. It is virtually synonymous with other basic Benedictine virtues like humility and fear of the Lord. See *Index:* Reverence.

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1.

propose (suggerere) is the same term used in 68.2 for the proper manner of requesting a change of obedience. It excludes all attempts by the suppliant to lecture, cajole or manipulate the superior. One does not cling to the idea or try to impose it. It is up to the superior to accept or reject it (see Kardong, 13.194-195). The same term occurs in 49.8, where the monk presents the abbot with his own wishes in the matter of Lenten penance. Likewise, prayer is not a matter of reminding God of God's duties, much less forcing God to perform them.

The *a fortiori* argument regarding prayer is common among the Church Fathers. Among Benedict's known sources, Basil, *reg.* 108, and Cassian, *conf*. 23.6, present the same view. Other references are Tertullian, *de orat*. 16.6; Evagrius, *reg. mon*. 11; Chrysostom, *de virg.* 32; Ambrose, *de inst. virg*. 8. See Vogüé, 5.571-573. This argument loses some of its cogency in our society, where reverence toward authority is not presumed, and equality is preferred to hierarchy. Even more corrosive is the philosophy of secularism, the view that we humans are autonomous and need not defer to any supernatural power.

presume (praesumimus) is a keyword for Benedict, appearing thirty-two times in RB. Most of these cases involve a monk usurping abbatial authority, but this passage suggests that the ultimate issue is lack of creaturely submission to divine hegemony. See *Index:* Presumption.

with humility and reverence (cum humilitate et reverentia). Vogüé, 2.449, points out Benedict's stylistic habit of doubling nouns: RM has only "humility" in this text (48.1). But humility *is* an exact synonym for reverence. The latter word is made up of *vereor* (fear) and the *re* prefix, which indicates a reflex feeling of insignificance in the face of a great power or entity. See *Index:* Humility, Reverence.

2.

Lord God of the universe (Domino Deo universorum) is an exalted title that fits perfectly with the sentiment of reverential awe that Benedict is trying to inculcate. It is surely no accident that he has replaced "Christ" of RM 48.2 with this much loftier divine title, just as he added reverence to RM 48.1. On reverential awe as the central spiritual virtue of RB, see Kardong, 4.84-86; Borias, 7.414-432.

total devotion (puritatis devotione). The notion of purity, which pervades this chapter (20.2,3,4) is essentially a matter of wholeness or completeness. In regard to prayer, it means unreserved commitment. If we cannot "look God straight in the eye," when we pray, the whole enterprise is compromised. Basil, *reg.* 108, talks about the fatality of a wandering gaze in an interview with the king. See *Index:* Purity of Heart.

3.

much talking (multiloquio). No doubt the ultimate source of RM 48.5 is Matthew 6:7, which criticizes the pagans for verbose prayers. Matthew considers this ridiculous, since God knows what we need before we ask. That is not the argument here, however. Rather, verbosity seems to represent dispersion and a chaotic superfluity opposed to "purity." Of course, RB 6 inveighs against loquacity of any kind, but it does not employ the sophisticated sort of psychospiritual insight suggested in RB 20. Although it also condemns *multiloquium,* RM 48 does not provide the source for the whole thought of RB 20.3, although it also condemns *multiloquium*. The literary source of 20.3 may be Ps.-Basil, *admon.* 11: "not many words, but a very pure mind will be pleasing to God." M. Casey, 4.103-120; 5.37-46, contends that long, prolix prayer functions here as the antithesis of sharp, focused ("pure") prayer for Benedict. Likewise, the verbal and physical clutter in the oratory criticized in RB 52.1,4 presents the same problem.

purity of heart (puritate cordis) is one of the most famous concepts to come out of the early monastic movement. It is the creation of John Cassian (*inst.* 5.32-33; *conf.* 1.6-7, etc.) although it has deep roots in the Bible and in Greek philosophy (see J. Raasch). Casey, previous note, compares purity of heart with "intentio cordis" (52.4), making it a matter of "aiming the heart at the target." This does not exclude the notion of purifying the heart from whatever distracts or impedes it from focusing on its true object, namely, God. For Cassian, purity of heart is the proximate goal of the monk, while the ultimate goal is heaven and God.

tearful compunction (compunctione lacrimarum). The literal meaning of *compunctio* is a sharp jab aimed at arousing a torpid animal or person. The real, though not the grammatical, object of compunction in this verse is the heart. The affliction implied is "hardness of heart," which is equivalent to the disobedience mentioned at the very beginning of RB (Prol 2). Lenten exercises are seen as a means of softening the heart (49.4), and tears are a sign of a broken, contrite heart (Casey, 5.37-46). For the early Christian appreciation of compunction and tears, see Hausherr, 3 passim; Gale, 13–30; see *Index:* Tears.

4.

short (brevis). Brevity in prayer follows logically (*ideo:* therefore) from the preceding verse. Benedict has added *pura* to RM 48.10, either due to his penchant for redoubling (see note 20.1) or because he suspects some may use this verse as an excuse to abbreviate their prayers: prayer should be short *so that* it might be pure. If Cassian is the source,

then the idea is that prayer should be short but frequent so as to maintain its intensity (see *conf.* 2.2; 4.2; 9.3,26,36; 10.5).

prolonged under the inspiration of divine grace (ex affectu inspirationis divinae gratiae protendatur). The argument of Cassian is basically psychological, but there is also the theological dimension to be considered. Prayer is not something we do for God, but itself a gift of God which comes from God and goes back to God. In *ep.* 130.20, Augustine says all that Benedict says in this chapter, and this letter may in fact be the source of RB 20 (Lentini, 245). See *Index:* Grace.

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RB 8–20 Overview: The Chapters on the Divine Office

Someone looking for a theology of prayer in St. Benedict's Rule is likely to be disappointed. The Rule has a dozen chapters on the Divine Office, but those chapters are mostly given over to a rather dry, factual description of the various prayers to be said in the Office. Since many of these arrangements have been abandoned by present-day monastic communities, these chapters are often omitted in the public reading of the Rule. Nevertheless, it will be worth our while to see how Benedict's Office relates to the liturgical practice of his time. With RB 19 and 20, slight as they are, we will find some pregnant comments on prayer which can be considerably expanded.

A. Early History of the Divine Office

1. The Church in General

The origins of the Divine Office seem to arise very early in the history of the Christian people, but there is disagreement among scholars regarding its relation to Judaism. N. Mitchell, 379–414, thinks that the roots of the Office go back to the Jewish practice of reciting prayers in the morning and evening. But S. Campbell, 562–563, sees the heart of Christian prayer to lie in the biblical injunction to "pray always" (1 Thess 1:2). This gave rise to the custom of the close-knit Christian community gathering not only at morning and evening, but also at the third, sixth and ninth hours. Yet all admit that the morning and

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evening prayers were the principal ones. Tertullian called them *orationes legitimae*.

Another feature of early Christian liturgy was the all-night vigil service before the greatest feasts of the calendar such as Easter, Pente-cost and Christmas. Such a vigil would be followed by the Eucharist at dawn, followed by some sleep and perhaps solemn vespers on the feast itself. Sometimes the origins of the vigil are connected to the biblical witness that the exodus from Egypt happened at night and so did Our Lord's resurrection. But the chief meaning of the all-night observance seems to be psychological: great feasts are marked by unusual practices.

Besides these elementary facts about early Christian worship, we also know something about the details of the services. Liturgical historians inform us that the psalms were chosen for their special applicability to the morning or evening hours, as well as their Christological overtones. Since the participants at these services were mostly the laity of the parish, no doubt cantors were used with the people singing refrains. Finally, it was typical to use incense and other elaborations at morning and evening prayer (Eusebius, *in ps.* 64).

2. The Early Monastic Office

When the first monastic communities emerge in the fourth century, they tend to build their public prayer life on the foundation of morning and evening prayer (Lauds and Vespers). Since the monastic life was organized especially for religious purposes, it was not hard for the monks to assemble during the day for Terce, Sext and None. But the most characteristic monastic Office was Vigils or night prayer. This was no longer the all-night observance of great feasts but a daily Office in which the monks rose in the middle of the night to spend time in prayerful watching.

Probably the monastic Office reached a fairly high level of development rather soon in its history, but we should not imagine that it was exactly like the services now seen in monasteries. Certainly the night Office, and perhaps most of the other Hours as well, featured cantors who performed the psalms and other parts while the rest listened and responded with simple refrains. The very lack of books and of artificial light would make this a simple necessity. See Dyer, 41–74; Vogüé, 26.274-292.

But the passive nature of the ancient Office was not merely a result of adverse circumstances. Very likely the monks deliberately approached the Office in a contemplative spirit, ready to listen to the Word of God and meditate on it. For them it was not a matter of actively performing a certain number of psalms and lessons as if such production was their function in the Church. More on this later.

Some early writers were not particularly happy with the development of the cenobitic Office. John Cassian, for instance, complains in his *inst.* 3.2 that the true monastic ideal was to pray at all times like the desert hermits of Egypt. But the Syrian monks (presumably the monastery at Bethlehem where he spent his first years as a monk) could not live up to this ideal, so they began to meet at set hours to pray together. See Vogüé, 18.24-29; Stewart, 159–179.

No doubt Cassian is promoting an admirable ideal when he urges continual prayer, but he is not a reliable liturgical historian. A. Veilleux, 2.292-315, shows that the Pachomian monasteries of south Egypt had no such ideal, nor did they even have an elaborate set of Offices. Rather, they simply met in the morning and evening for *synaxis* (prayer). Even more surprisingly, their prayer did not consist primarily of psalms but contained a variety of materials. No doubt all of it was biblical, but it is clear the Pachomians did not feel bound by what later came to be regarded as the classical norms for Office.

One of those norms was the saying of twelve psalms, a tradition that Benedict himself held to tenaciously. But Veilleux points out that such a norm was in fact based on a legendary story in which an angel warned Pachomius not to exceed this number of psalms. That story was recorded about forty years after the death of Pachomius (*vit. Pach.* 22; Cassian, *inst.* 2.5) and it seems to stem from a rather different mentality which put great value on symbolic numbers and quantities.

The difficulty with this approach, which is also shared by Benedict with his insistence on 150 psalms (RB 18), is that it may cause us to lose sight of the whole purpose of the Office. In this sense Cassian's point is well taken, for there is no magical number of Offices or psalms that is pleasing to God. What is essential to the Office is an atmosphere which is conducive to heartfelt prayer. If this means to pray less often or pray fewer psalms, then that is what we should do.

B. Benedict and His Sources

1. The Rule of the Master

So far in this commentary, we have been able to situate Benedict rather precisely against the backdrop of his literary source, namely, the Rule of the Master. Beginning with the chapters on the Office, however, the dependency is not so clear. Here we assume with most scholars that RM 33–49 is one of the sources of Benedict's liturgical material, but we will take note of other opinions. See Vogüé, 5.383-392.

One of the most obvious differences between liturgical sections of RM and RB is that Benedict has moved the whole unit to a place closer to the beginning of the document. In fact, the chapters on the Divine

Office in RB follow directly on the so-called "doctrinal section" (Vogüé), and this may have considerable significance for the meaning of the Office. RB 5,6 and 7 discuss silence, obedience and humility, all essentially passive virtues which demand an attitude of ready, attentive listening before the word and will of God, especially as it is communicated through the Bible and the superior.

By placing the liturgical chapters in such a setting, Benedict may wish to give them a similarly contemplative tone. We have seen above that the early monastic Office, and particularly that of Vigils, was primarily a time of listening. This is rather different than "doing something for God," which is what the typical monastic Office felt like before Vatican II. Then it was a considerable labor to keep up with the fast pace, the complicated turning of ribbons and the sheer difficulty of the Latin. Nowadays, one can truly relax in choir and peacefully enjoy the simple, slow rhythms and the word of God in one's native tongue.

But if Benedict improves the position of the liturgical section, he also loses something by his wholesale changes in the liturgical material of the Master. As often happens with such editorial shifting, items are displaced and garbled, thus making for a certain incoherence in the revised text. In fact, Benedict's liturgical chapters are not particularly logical, especially in their ordering.

According to Vogüé, 5.393-418, the trouble all starts with Sunday Vigils. For the Master, this Office is an all-night service and quite unlike the Vigils for other nights, so he places it at the very end of his section (RM 49). Benedict, however, conforms Sunday Vigils to that of the other nights and then he moves it into the middle of the unit as RB 11 so as to put it with the other chapters on Vigils (RB 9–10).

According to Vogüé, this prompted Benedict to move the chapter which originally introduced the Day Hours to a later position as RB 16. The effect of this is to have Matins (Lauds) discussed before this introduction in RB 12–13, which has the effect of making this Office appear to be allied with Vigils as a night Office. But in fact Matins is one of the seven day Hours. Another effect of Benedict's remodelling is to disrupt the titles of the chapters, some of which do not make a great deal of sense when we consider their contents. For example, RB 16 is not about "the celebration of the Divine Office during the day" but about the number seven for the Day Hours.

Besides these literary alterations, Benedict has changed some of the contents of the Divine Office given in RM. The main change is the one we have just noted: there are no all-night Vigils, even on the greatest feasts. In abolishing the ancient watch before the feasts, Benedict was going along with a trend that was affecting the whole Western Church. By the sixth century, many churches and monasteries no longer carried

on this practice, probably because it was disruptive of regular life and no doubt also because it was very difficult.

In general, Benedict does not approve of an horarium that will force the monks to return to bed for a second sleep. The monks of the Master rise about midnight, so they cannot get enough sleep before Vigils and must return to bed before Matins. Benedict's community rises at about 2 A.M. with about seven hours of sleep; hence there is no need to return to bed for the second sleep. Experience shows that some people cannot "break the night" without ruining their health and so dispensations have to be given if they are to survive such a regime.

A second important change in Benedict's scheme for the Divine Office is his abandonment of the "running Psalter." The Master, and probably most of Benedict's predecessors, treat the psalms as a kind of homogeneous series of prayers that are to be prayed one after the other. Each psalm is simply considered a unit; one simply picks up where one left off and prays the number needed for that particular Office.

Benedict, of course, has a very different arrangement (RB 18). He wants the Psalter to be begun at a certain point each Sunday, and he constructs a precise schema for each Office in order to do so. We will see that this is based on a system outside of the monastic tradition. Suffice it to say here that Benedict's departure from the "running Psalter" is a rather surprising break with the monastic tradition.

A final change that Benedict effects in the liturgical arrangements of the Master concerns the use of Alleluia. The Master greatly increases the use of that joyous Hebrew exclamation, employing it not just during Easter time, as does the Roman Church, but at all seasons except the penitential times of Advent and Lent (RM 45). Benedict moderates this exuberance, but still uses Alleluia more than the Great Church. For the possible theological significance of this point, see RB 15 notes.

Before we look at some of the other sources exploited by Benedict in the creation of a liturgical order for his monastery, we should mention that some scholars deny that Benedict used the Rule of the Master for a model *at all.* For example, E. Manning, "Reflexions," thinks that the liturgical arrangements in RB 8–18 are actually typical of the seventh century and not the sixth. The conclusion he draws is that these chapters were only added to RB later, perhaps when the community of Monte Cassino had moved to the Lateran Basilica in Rome. See also Renner, 45–74.

Vogüé does not agree that RB 8–18 are interpolated, but he does admit that within the Rule itself there are signs of a certain liturgical evolution. Thus he points out (5.436-443) that in RB 43.10-12 we seem to have a simpler form of the Little Hours than appears in RB 17.2-3, and 18.1-2 may represent an even later stage in the elaboration of the

Little Hours. Vogüé, 5.401, also feels that some of the chapter titles must have been done by a later redactor, especially RB 10T, 13T and 14T.

2. The Roman Office and Other Sources

The second main source of Benedict's liturgical material is the Roman Office. One would expect that he would draw his ideas exclusively from the monastic Rules, but Manning has a theory why he did not. He thinks that this part of RB was actually written, presumably by someone other than Benedict, after the community had fled Monte Cassino for the Lateran Basilica in Rome about A.D. 570. In the city, they would have been in contact with the Roman Office and hence its influence on RB.

Matins is the Office where RB most closely follows the Roman pattern. But perhaps the greatest similarity occurs in the distribution of the Psalter into two main divisions, namely, Psalms 1–108 for Vigils and 109–150 for Vespers. We have seen that this marks a sharp break with the "running Psalter" favored by monks elsewhere. Yet it should be added that the Roman Office often has more psalms than does RB, while the latter has a wider variety of other prayers and hymns.

These other elements are drawn from a remarkably broad spectrum of liturgical traditions, ranging from Byzantium and Jerusalem in the East to Arles and Milan in the West. Most of these materials occur in the third nocturn of Festal Vigils, where RB becomes a veritable cosmopolitan gathering house. The impression is one of broadmindedness and eclecticism, rather than a doctrinaire approach to monastic prayer.

C. Some Liturgical Issues

One question that is definitely on Benedict's mind is the singing of the entire Psalter each week. In RB 18.22-25 (see notes), he comes down quite hard on this point. This insistence could make Benedict appear something of a rigorist, but that is probably not the case. Compared to some of his sources, such as RM and the Roman Office, he has in fact mitigated observances such as midnight rising and the number of psalms. His insistence on 150 psalms can be seen as an effort to make sure these mitigations are not taken as an open license for laxity.

Vogüé, 5.545, sees the matter from another angle. In his view, Benedict seems to consider the Psalter itself as a kind of sacred object for veneration. Compared to that, the "running Psalter" of the Master and the other monastic Rules puts the emphasis on "sacred time" and not the 150 psalms as such. One might add that the modern revision of the Divine Office actually amounts to an abandonment of the "Psalter veneration" of Benedict for a renewed appreciation of the Office as an organic whole.

Linked to this shift in vision is the issue of the Office as "service." We have noted (9.2) that a certain kind of clerical monasticism tends to see the Divine Office as a service to the Church, much in the same sense as the Mass. No doubt this view originally came out of feudalism, where each social group played a certain role in society. The role of the nobility was to govern and fight; the peasants worked; and the monks prayed.

As for the use of *servitium/servitus* in the liturgical chapters of RB, it would be better to understand it in the context of its usage in other parts of the document. No doubt the best-known use of the term occurs in RB Prol 45, where it appears as "the school of the Lord's service." This text makes it quite plain that our service is to the Lord and not to any abstract set of ideas or institution. As prayer, of course, the Divine Office meant first of all to foster relations of love between the participants and their Lord. The phrase "duties of our service" *(servitutis officia)* appears in RB 16.2 as a reference to the Divine Office, so one is led to ask to whom that duty is owed. But the word "duty" *(officium)* is also used in RB 53.3 where Christ is met in the traveler. In that text, the monks owe the "duty of love" to Christ in the stranger. Here again the object of monastic duty is Christ himself.

Probably the most striking liturgical use of *servitus* for the Office is seen in RB 50.4, which is outside our purview here but nonetheless quite important. In that little chapter, the monks are told to say the Office even on a journey so they will "not neglect their measure of service" *(servitutis pensum).* This could easily be taken to mean that each monk must pray a certain amount of material per day to meet some obligation—perhaps legal. But the same phrase *servitutis pensum* turns up nearby in RB 49.5, where it is a question of Lenten observance. In that case, monks are counselled to add something to their usual "service" during the holy season. Presumably this refers to the entire monastic life. Consequently, it seems that the reference to service in RB 50.4 and elsewhere should be taken as part of the entire monastic commitment to Christ and not in the narrow sense of a legal obligation to any human authority. For the debate over whether 150 psalms are normative for modern Benedictines, see Roth, 119–133, and A. Butler, 175–185; 54–57.

D. Psalmody and Prayer

We began this survey by remarking that Benedict does not give us a theology of prayer in his liturgical chapters, nor anywhere else. Since he did not set out to do this, we should not hold it against him. Nevertheless, in RB 19–20 he does make comments on both public and

private prayer that tell us a lot about his views on the matter. These chapters are very concise, but they pack a good deal of spiritual depth.

In RB 19, the message is that the Divine Office should be characterized by a spirit of reverential awe. The theology is very simple: the all-Holy God is present everywhere, but especially when people are praying together. Therefore the whole attitude of the monks at prayer, whether in terms of exterior posture or interior attention, should be permeated with the utmost gravity and devotion.

Actually, this theme of Fear of the Lord is by no means restricted to the liturgy in RB. It forms the spiritual core of the first step of humility (7.10-13; 26-30) and it also appears in a group of the instruments of good works (4.44-47). Since it is featured at these three very important points in the Rule, it seems reasonable to call it one of the key spiritual themes of the document. See Kardong, 4.84-86.

In our age of egalitarian democracy and breezy casualness, Benedict's extremely verticalized spirituality of reverential awe before the towering majesty of God may be hard to appreciate. Certainly it is humanized and mitigated in various ways throughout the Rule, and it should not be used to introduce an atmosphere of fussiness and tension into the liturgy as sometimes happened in the recent past. But if the Divine Office is not to become slovenly, and ultimately banal, there must be a strong conviction by all who pray it that it is indeed done in the presence of the Creator of the Universe.

RB 20 is concerned with the very nature of prayer itself. Although we can argue about what Benedict means by *oratio* (see below), there is no question about what he sees to be the essence of prayer: it is "purity." Probably the root of this thinking goes back to Cassian's concept of Purity of Heart, which he makes the distinguishing quality of the monastic life itself.

For Cassian, and no doubt for Benedict, purity is primarily a question of single-minded focus. The person with a pure heart is concerned with God alone; all else is secondary or nonexistent. To pray with purity means to devote one's attention fully toward God, who is the object of all true prayer. From the psychological standpoint, that will usually mean that prayer be short and frequent, for limited human concentration precludes anything else. When it comes to public prayer in common, it would seem to call for a Divine Office devoid of unnecessary complication and done in a way that promotes tranquil concentration and not distraction. This is why the modern introduction of periods of silence in the Office is so crucial.

Finally, RB 20.5 has given rise to much discussion among commentators. It appears to be a sort of appendix to the chapter, adding a remark on communal prayer to a chapter on private prayer. That, at least, is

suggested by the adversative word *tamen* (however). Yet, exactly what is meant by the word *oratio* (prayer) as it is used in this verse?

Clearly it cannot refer to the whole Office, for what is set down in RB 8–18 is not short. Nor is it sung sitting or kneeling so that all must "rise" (*surgant*) afterwards. In common parlance, the "oration" was the concluding prayer for an Office, but it was not a silent prayer and not said kneeling. So the *oratio* discussed here must be silent prayer said by all during or after the conclusion. Cassian tells of pauses between the psalms, when all prostrate in prayer (*inst.* 2.7).

Lentini, 245–247, is of the opinion that Benedict assumes a short period of silent prayer *after* the conclusion of the Office. That is what is implied in RB 52, and it was customary in traditional Benedictinism. Vogüé, however, has a different theory of prayer (see 7.139-149, among many other places) altogether. For him, *oratio* is strictly silent, private prayer and never verbal or communal. Psalmody, to his way of thinking, prepares the heart for prayer, but is not itself prayer. Therefore, it is logical that the monks paused between the psalms—to pray! Whether they actually prostrated (see note 4.56) is doubtful, given the logistical problem of a group of people doing so together, but prayer pauses make good sense. Many monasteries have reintroduced this practice.

XXI: DE DECANIS MONASTERII

[1]Si maior fuerit congregatio, eligantur de ipsis fratres boni testimonii et sanctae conversationis, et constituantur decani, [2]qui sollicitudinem gerant super decanias suas in omnibus secundum mandata Dei et praecepta abbatis sui. [3]Qui decani tales eligantur in quibus securus abbas partiat onera sua, [4]et non eligantur per ordinem, sed secundum vitae meritum et sapientiae doctrinam.

[5]Quique decani, si ex eis aliqua forte quis inflatus superbia repertus fuerit reprehensibilis, correptus semel et iterum atque tertio si emendare noluerit, deiciatur, [6]et alter in loco eius qui dignus est surrogetur. [7]Et de praeposito eadem constituimus.

RB 21: THE DEANS OF THE MONASTERY

1. If the community is large, let there be chosen from them brothers of good reputation and holy life, and let these be made deans. 2. In all matters they should take care of their deaneries according to commandments of God and the orders of their abbot. 3. Only those should be chosen deans with whom the abbot can confidently share his burdens.

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4. They should not be chosen by rank, but for the merit of their lives and the wisdom of their teaching.

5. But if it should happen that one of the deans is found to be puffed up with pride and needs to be corrected, he should be warned once, and again, and a third time. If he refuses to amend, he should be removed from office, 6. and another who is worthy put in his place. 7. We lay down the same regulations for the prior.

RB 21 Notes

T

The title of RB 21 is identical to that of RM 11, but a long *incipit* has been omitted: "Here begins the organization of the monastery: delimitation, observance, structure, continuity, supervision and norms, which give the name of monastic rule to this (part), the Lord making it known to us and having made it known, holding us accountable for it." In addition to dropping this enigmatic statement, Benedict has drastically reduced the chapter on the deans from 123 to 7 verses. The reduction is no doubt due to the decreasing importance of deaneries by the time of Benedict, but it is also likely he found the Master's style prolix and the content of RM problematic.

The custom of dividing large groups of people into smaller units, and of rotating groups and individuals for various tasks, such as kitchen duty, was common in the ancient world. We see it already at Qumran (1 QS 6.3,11) and in the Roman army, where Pachomius may have learned it (Jerome's preface to the *reg. Pach.* 2). See Holzherr, 168.

1.

If the community is large (Si maior fuerit congregatio), literally, *rather* large *(maior).* Since the dean *(decanus)* is over ten *(decim)* persons, this implies at least twenty members since the plural *deans* is used. The role of heads of tens is an ancient one, with roots in both biblical and monastic history. In Exodus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 1:13, Moses is advised to choose helpers to judge minor disputes, and in Acts 6:1ff. the apostles choose deacons to serve the tables. RB 21.1 uses vocabulary reminiscent of all these biblical passages. The earliest accounts of Egyptian cenobitism among the Pachomians (Jerome, *ep*. 22.35; Augustine, *mor. eccl*. 1.67) mention similar officials. RM 11 is Benedict's proximate source, but the Master has two deans per deanery (for surveillance) and calls them *praepositi*.

let there be chosen from them (elegantur de ipsis). Nothing is said about who makes the choice, but to judge from other passages of RB it was

probably the community. In the election of the abbot, the community proposed (*eligere,* 64.2) one of its members, whom the bishop then confirmed (*constituere,* 64.4 and 21.1). In the choice of deans, no doubt the abbot has the right of confirmation as is only reasonable since they share his authority. See Lentini, 249–250.

It is significant that Benedict chooses his structural models from biblical sources rather than from those of politics and the family (Holzherr, 168). Notice, however, that he has carefully omitted the ecclesiastical model proposed by RM 11.9-11 (bishops/priests/deacons = abbots/deans).

good reputation (boni testimonii) is a quote from Acts 6:4. It is a bit strange that reputation is mentioned before a good life.

holy life (sanctae conversationis). *Conversatio* refers to the whole lifestyle of a person. In this case, it means that no one should be chosen a dean unless they are leading an exemplary monastic life. RM 11.4 requires that the deans be chosen for their "proven gravity, wisdom, moderation, vigilance and humility." See *Index:* Conversatio, Holiness.

2.

take care (sollicitudinem gerant). *Sollicitus* usually means worried or anxious, but that cannot be the connotation here. Benedict uses the word often, sometimes to mean surveillance (7.18) and elsewhere to refer to caregiving (53.15). Since the deans are to watch over *(solliciti)* the dormitory, and discussion of deans leads to the section on punishment (RB 23–30), a case can be made for the translation "watch over" (Vogüé, Schmitz). Certainly the deans in RM are little more than watchdogs or spies, but RB 21.3-4 seems to lead in a different direction. See *Index:* Cave.

the orders of their abbot (praecepta abbatis sui). As he often does in speaking of monastic officials (31.15; 60.4-5; 65.16-17), Benedict makes sure they know their place, namely, in the firm control of the abbot. This is especially necessary here, since he has just given the deans responsibility for *all (in omnibus)* aspects of the lives of their deaneries.

3.

share his burdens (partiat onera sua). The language is reminiscent of Exodus 18:21-22, where Jethro urges Moses to share the task of judging with other Israelites. The implication is that the abbot is sharing his authority as well as his work load.

confidently (securus). According to RM 11.14, good deans can ease the abbot's anxiety before the impending judgment of God. They do

this by preventing the brothers from sinning by their intervention (see RM 11.27-83). In place of this huge and rather crushing chapter, Benedict in a few deft strokes assigns a more positive role to the deans.

4.

by rank (per ordinem). Rank *(ordo)* is very important for Benedict (see RB 63), determining the place of every member in the ordinary life of the community. But for leadership roles, other special qualifications are needed. Here, the point is not the rights of the individual, but ability to assist others on the journey. See *Index:* Rank.

the merit of their lives and the wisdom of their doctrine (vitae meritum et sapientiae doctrinam) are precisely the same qualifications as for the choice of abbot (64.2), thus reinforcing the point that the dean shares in the essential authority of the abbot in much the same way as the cellarer (see 31.1 and 64.16). See *Index:* Merit.

wisdom of their teaching (sapientiae doctrinam), literally, "doctrine of their wisdom." The phrase can already be seen in Proverbs 24:14 and Sirach 23:2; 50:29. It is used several times by Augustine (*c. Faust.; in Ps.* 118, *serm.* 22.7-8) and other patristic writers. It probably refers to a thorough knowledge of the Bible, in the same sense as 64.9 ("learned in divine law"). Clearly, this biblical learning must be internalized before it can be called spiritual wisdom. It is a fruit of *lectio divina* in some monks. It is especially noteworthy that Benedict serenely accepts and encourages personal spiritual authority in others than the abbot, which cannot be said of the Rule of the Master. See *Index:* Wisdom.

Borias, 5.46-54, considers 21.4 to be an inclusive repetition of 21.1: both give qualities of a good dean and both use *eligere*. The result is that 21.1-4 can then be considered a unit. Since 21.5 begins an abrupt and harsh critique of the deans, whereas 21.1-4 is quite positive and irenic, it appears that 5-7 is a later addition.

is found (repertus). *Repertus* is an erudite word, the ordinary term being *inventus*. Probably Benedict is influenced here by legal terminology (Lentini, 252).

5-6.

removed from office and another who is worthy put in his place (deiciatur, et alter in loco eius, qui dignus est subrogetur). The language is the same as in 65.20, where the prior is replaced for insubordination. Since the prior *(praepositus)* is explicitly mentioned in the next verse, it is likely that these two chapters are connected. Borias, previous note, thinks that RB 21 was added to after the trauma that produced RB 65. Perhaps Benedict's hard experience with a prior caused him to reeval-

uate his view of all monastic officials. Chronologically speaking, the system of deans long preceded that of priors, but by Benedict's day, priors were more common than deans (see Overview, B). It also appears that the penal material (21.5-7), which presupposes RB 23–30, has been added to the substance drawn from RM 11. See *Index:* Prior.

RB 21 Overview

RB 21 does not much resemble its literary source in RM 11. Nevertheless, it is necessary to compare them closely to understand the distinctive flavor of Benedict's little chapter. The chapter on the deans is not one of the great chapters of Benedict's Rule, but it has its interests, both in terms of formal structure and content. Our main source of information here is Vogüé, 3.289-305.

A. The Deans in RM 11

RM 11 is one of the most important chapters in that whole document. One sign of this is the very size of the chapter: 123 verses, which is large even for the Master. But the importance of RM 11 is even clearer from its place at the very head of the "disciplinary" (*ordo monasterii,* see note on 21T) section of that Rule, namely, RM 11–95. From this we can conclude that, after the abbot, the deans are the very cornerstone of the Master's system of authority.

What is the role of the dean *(praepositus)* in RM 11? The answer is very simple: surveillance. Indeed, the Master is so obsessed with the need to watch every move of every monk that he provides *two* deans for each *decada,* not because he wishes to lighten the burden of the single dean, but simply because two can watch better than one.

The dean is given a rod at ordination (11.15), which seems to symbolize power, but the authority of the deans is strictly vicarious and functional for the Master. Their only real task is to implement the abbot's teachings and to report to him all the doings of the brethren. So, while it can be said that these deans have power, they really have little or no *personal* authority. They are merely watchdogs and executors of abbatial authority.

In order to ground his system of hierarchical authority on a larger foundation, the Master invokes the structure of the Great Church, where the bishop holds supreme power, the priests, deacons and clergy carrying out the episcopal mandates. That is only implicit in RM 11.9, but elsewhere the Master shows plainly enough that the abbot holds the place of the bishop in the monastery (RM 1.82-86). In RM 46 the dean is compared to the deacon.

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B. The Deans in RB 21

Compared to RM 11, RB 21 is a tiny treatise of merely seven verses. Moreover, it no longer leads off the "disciplinary" section of the Rule. As we have seen (see RB 8–20 Overview, B.1), the liturgical chapters have been intruded at the beginning of this part by Benedict. The result is to displace the material on the deans from its position of predominance and to further separate the deans from the chapter on the abbot (RB 2).

This literary change mirrors historical reality, for by the time of Benedict the system of deaneries was waning in importance in cenobitic monasteries. In the original Pachomian structure, the house masters (*decani,* Jerome, preface to *reg. Pach*. 2) were very important. And although Cassian calls them *praepositi* (*inst*. 4.10,17), he reports the same fact for northern Egypt. The deans are still of considerable importance for the Master, but it seems that for Benedict they were not.

The devolution of the deaneries may actually have taken place *during* Benedict's career. According to A. Borias, 5.38-55, the strange but telltale mention of the prior in 21.7 is really a late addition by the author who has switched over to a "prior-system." According to this theory, the chapter on the deans was important in the original edition, but by the final editing it had become something of an archaeological fragment. Yet this does not mean that RB 21 is without importance for the overall study of the Rule, for even though the deans are fading away as a system, what is said about them as individuals is important.

Twice in this little chapter Benedict gives the qualifications for deans: "good repute and holy life" (21.1) and "virtuous living and wise teaching" (21.4). Compared to the criteria put forth by RM 11.4 ("proven gravity, wisdom, moderation, vigilance and humility"), these qualifications do not seem very distinctive. Yet the mention of "wise teaching" *(sapientiae doctrinam)* does seem significant. The same is said of the abbot in 64.2, and in 64.9 he is said to be "learned in the divine law" (Scripture). So it appears that Benedict compares the deans very closely with the father of the community: it is not enough that the deans know the mind of the abbot and carry out his wishes; they must themselves be spiritual guides who have internalized the biblical message. As such they can help their brethren out of the fullness of their own storehouse of divine wisdom.

A text that corroborates this is 46.5-6, where the abbot *and* the "spiritual elders" *(spiritalibus senioribus)* are persons to whom one can confide sins and sorrows in great confidence, "for they know how to heal their wounds as well as those of others without making them public." In the view of Vogüé, Benedict's references to *seniores* usually refer to the deans.

If that is so, then we have to admit that some passages in RB do present the deans/seniors as exercising surveillance over the brothers (e.g., 22.3 [dormitory]; 48.17 [reading]; 56.3 [table]). But our point here is not to deny the deans disciplinary authority; rather, it is to round out that portrait with true spiritual competence of the kind that the Master never accords to anyone but the abbot.

When we compare RB 21 to RM 11, we can also say that Benedict has enriched the biblical basis of the chapter. We have seen that the Master compares the abbot and dean to the bishop and deacon. Benedict tactfully avoids such problematic ecclesiology, but he does quote Acts 6:4, where the deacons are required to be of "good reputation." Perhaps in order not to limit the imagery to the biblical deacons, Benedict adds language from Exodus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 1:13. See Kardong, 17.102.

Finally, what are we to make of Benedict's closing remarks (21.5-7) on the deans? Why has he added this rather harsh coda to a very positive and peaceful chapter? A survey of the entire Rule shows that many chapters end this way, but the case seems especially awkward in RB 21. Borias, 5.38-55, thinks that problems with a prior (RB 65) caused Benedict to go back and add this warning to the chapter on the deans. For our part, once we know that the last three verses were an afterthought by Benedict, we are justified in bracketing them. When we do so, we are left with 21.1-4, a fine little statement on the delegation of spiritual authority in a Benedictine monastery.

XXII: QUOMODO DORMIANT MONACHI

[1]Singuli per singula lecta dormiant. [2]Lectisternia pro modo conversationis secundum dispensationem abbatis sui accipiant.

[3]Si potest fieri omnes in uno loco dormiant; sin autem multitudo non sinit, deni aut viceni cum senioribus qui super eos solliciti sint pausent. [4]Candela iugiter in eadem cella ardeat usque mane.

[5]Vestiti dormiant et cincti cingellis aut funibus, ut cultellos suos ad latus suum non habeant dum dormiunt, ne forte per somnum vulnerent dormientem; [6]et ut parati sint monachi semper et, facto signo abs-que mora surgentes, festinent invicem se praevenire ad opus Dei, cum omni tamen gravitate et modestia. [7]Adulescentiores fratres iuxta se non habeant lectos, sed permixti cum senioribus. [8]Surgentes vero ad opus Dei invicem se moderate cohortentur propter somnulentorum excusationes.

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RB 22: HOW THE MONKS SHOULD SLEEP

1. Let them sleep in separate beds. 2. The abbot should see to it that they receive bedding suitable to their monastic life.

3. If possible, let them all sleep in one place, but if their number does not permit it, let them sleep in tens and twenties with the seniors in charge of them. 4. A candle should be kept continually burning in that room until morning.

5. They will sleep clothed and girt with belts or cords. For they should not wear their knives during sleep in case they might wound the sleeper in his dreams. 6. And so the monks will always be on the ready to rise without delay at the signal. They should hasten to beat one another to the work of God—of course with all decorum and modesty. 7. The younger brothers should not have their beds next to one another, but interspersed with the elders. 8. Moreover, when they rise for the work of God, they should gently encourage each other to offset the excuses of the drowsy.

RB 22 Notes

T

The question of sleep for the monks is treated in RM 11.108-121, an appendix to the chapter on the deans which Benedict has made into a separate chapter. RM 29 describes the arrangement of the beds. RM 11.108-121 is merely an example of the surveillance of the deans, but RB 22 is a more positive spiritual treatise on the need for vigilance in regard to the Night Office. Strictly speaking, the title of the chapter ("How the monks sleep") is not too accurate, for the chapter has more to do with rising than with sleeping. This will come out in the notes, but especially in the Overview.

1.

separate beds (lecta). What we take for granted was unusual in ancient times, when people tended to sleep in groups. A *lectum* was a raised bed as compared to a mere mat on the floor (Lentini, 256).

2.

bedding (lectisternia). The word can mean simply "bed" as in the previous verse (thus Linderbauer, 266, and du Cange, 5.52) but Vogüé prefers "bedding," and the context suggests that is right. A third possibility would be the *position* of the bed, and the verse would then refer to the order of seniority, but this is precluded by v. 7, where old and young are intermixed.

their monastic life (pro modo conversationis). The meaning of this difficult verse lies not in the unusual word *conversatio* but in the context. It is

not clear whether Benedict is saying (1) that the whole community should receive suitably monastic (i.e., not luxurious) bedding or (2) that each one should receive bedding that matches his personal level of ascesis. The reference to the abbot as the distributor of bedding seems to favor the second interpretation (Vogüé, Lentini) although I have left the question open in my ambiguous translation. In RB 55.15, Benedict spells out the details of typical monastic bedding for that era: mat, woolen blanket, light covering, pillow. In favor of the first interpretation, v. 2 can be taken as a corrective to v. 1: Although the monks sleep in separate beds like the rich, their bedding should be like that of the poor. See *Index:* Conversatio.

the abbot should see to it (secundum dispensationem abbae sui). The literal translation is: according to the abbot's arrangement. The abbot's role as the Lord's faithful steward (RB 64.5; see Ps 104:21; Luke 12:42) who provides the monks with what they need, may not seem a very exalted one. Yet RB 34 shows that communal peace depends largely on each person getting what he needs (not wants). See Kardong, 21.192-200.

3.

If possible (Si potest fieri). RM 29 assumes the community will be small enough to sleep in one room, but imperial legislation allowed large communities to have several dormitories (Justinian, *nov*. 5,3 and 133,1). This verse is one clue that Benedict's community is larger than that of the Master (see Vogüé's introduction to *The Rule of the Master,* 15). By the Middle Ages, monastic dormitories could be very large. The Plan of St. Gall (Born and Horn, 1.260) for example, provides for a dormitory for seventy-one monks.

in charge (solliciti). As we noted at RB 21.1, this word can refer to either surveillance or care. In this case, the former seems to be the flavor since the author is a bit nervous about the conduct in the dormitory: the candle is left burning (v. 4); gravity and modesty are needed (v. 6); seniors should be interspersed with juniors (v. 7). See *Index:* Care.

seniors (senioribus). The mention of "tens or twenties" suggests the deans of RB 21, one of whose roles is disciplinary. But the provision that seniors (senioribus) be intercalated with youngsters *(adulescentiores)* does suggest that *senior* can also be a reference to chronological age. See *Index:* Senior.

4.

continually (jugiter) may be a conscious corrective to RM 29.5-6, where the lamp is left unlit when the supply of oil is exhausted. Generally, the Master's community seems more affluent than Benedict's (notes 40.8 and 48.7), yet the latter is unwilling to let the lamp go out

under *any* circumstances. This may suggest sexual prudery, but it is more likely a means of avoiding confusion at the time of rising. Still, it is strange that the Master, who is terribly worried about sexual abuse in the dormitory (RM 11.107; 118-119; 121), should permit the place to be pitch dark, and that on a regular basis (RM 30.19).

5.

Clothed (vestiti). Apparently ancient sleeping customs did not ordinarily involve night clothes, but where people were sleeping in common dormitories, modesty would require them. To judge from RB 55.10, much the same clothing was worn day and night: *tunica et cuculla*. The Pachomian monks, the earliest of all cenobites, slept clothed and belted (*vit. Pach*. 22; Palladius, *hist. Laus.* 32).

and girt (et cincti). The purpose of this girding is twofold: to safeguard modesty and to make one ready to proceed quickly to the Night Office (Vigils). Indeed, these two themes dominate this chapter, and its interpretation is largely determined by the weight placed on the one or the other.

They should not wear their knives (ut cultellos suos ad latum suum non habeant). In the Latin, this statement is actually a result clause dependent on the preceding sentence. Lentini explains the obscure logic as follows: The knife was worn in a heavy leather girdle called a *bracile,* but the monks were not to gird themselves with that heavy equipment at night. Rather, the lighter *cingula* or *funes* was to be used (see note 55.19). *RB 1980* considers the relationship between 22.5a and 5b to be adversative. I separate the two sentences for reading comfort, but agree with Lentini, 257.

The sleeper (dormientem). No doubt the subject is "knives," but one can make a case for "lest they might wound their fellow-sleeper in their dreams." It is clear from RM 11.111-112, though, that they must not wear the *brachilis* for fear of wounding themselves.

6.

And so (et ut). This is probably a result clause dependent on "clothed and girt," but to leave it so in English creates a stylistic awkwardness which is the result of the author's project of reducing the verbiage of RM 11.111-112 (Vogüé, 2.541).

all decorum and modesty (omni . . . gravitate et modestia). Probably Benedict's insistence on haste to the Work of God is connected with biblical themes such as the readiness of the Israelites on Passover night (see Luke 12:35) and the Pauline theme of running for the prize (Phil 3:12; see Kardong, 6.166). This is the root cause of his dislike of tardiness (see RB 43; Kardong, 9). All of these motifs are aspects of the good

zeal essential to a Benedictine monk (72.1-2). Yet when such ideals are translated into behavior, one must take into account practical problems such as the danger of frivolity: hence the caveat for "decorum and modesty." See also note 43.4; *Index:* Alacrity, Run.

beat one another (invicem se praevenire). This kind of "spiritual competition" is seen elsewhere in RB: In 63.17, the juniors outdo each other in respecting the seniors (but the respect is not strictly mutual; see Kardong, 23.202). In 72.4, the monks all vie to obey one another. In the Rule of the Master (92), the monks are urged to engage in fierce competition to become the next abbot! But the "spiritual competition" of RB 22 is effectively transformed by the edifying spectacle of mutual assistance in v. 8. Such common endeavor is absent from RM 11.108-121 and in general from that Rule. See *Index:* Competition.

7-8.

younger . . . elders (adulescentiores . . . seniores). Although the term is imprecise, *adulescens* probably refers to teenagers. Benedict distinguishes them from children *(pueri)* in 30.2 and 63.18, but we do not know how old they might have been. Nevertheless, it is clear that the issue here is age, for in regard to rank the lower monks are called *juniores* (see RB 63). Therefore, the term *seniores* must also refer to age in this verse (but see note 22.3). Vogüé, 10.35, thinks the *adulescentiores* are still boys not in vows, because such have no rank in 63.18, nor have they here. That is, their beds can be rearranged. He also thinks *seniores* must mean "deans" here, because it does so in RM 11.121, the model for this verse. See *Index:* Senior.

the drowsy (somnulentorum). Probably this refers to the younger people, who naturally need more sleep. The particle *vero* (moreover) seems to connect v. 8 to the previous verse. If this connection is taken seriously, then the purpose of mixing seniors and juniors is to insure prompt rising, which also seems to be the main theological thrust of the chapter (vv. 5-8). If the worry was sexual, then it would seem that mixing youths with mature men would be a dubious solution to the problem.

RB 22 Overview

RB 22 is a small chapter that seems to deal with a peripheral matter, namely, how the monks are to sleep. Not surprisingly, its cultural aspects are quite obsolete since the circumstances of life are so different in our time—at least for monks in the Western world. Therefore, we might be tempted to give the chapter short shrift. But that would be a mistake, because on closer inspection, and especially in comparison with the Rule of the Master, RB 22 turns out to have a significant message.

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A. Benedict's Treatise on the Dormitory

The material on sleep and the dormitory is somewhat jumbled and disorganized in RM. The largest bloc appears at the end of the huge chapter on the deans (RM 11.108-121), but there are other remarks in RM 29; 30.19 and 44.12 as well. Benedict has gathered this material into a neat little treatise in RB 22. Although the treatment at first glance does not seem much different than that of the Master, it is in fact quite distinctive.

Basically the Master is concerned about the chastity of the monks. His treatise begins with a blunt demand: "The deans are to have beds near theirs (the brothers) so that during the night they may correct any vicious faults of theirs" (11.108). If this were not enough, the Master becomes quite explicit in 118-119, where he says that the monks sleep clothed and girded so as not to touch themselves impurely and provoke erotic fantasies.

Preparedness for the Night Office is a secondary theme for the Master. It is another reason for sleeping clothed and girded, and it even may be the predominant one in terms of total verses, but it somehow does not have the same urgency as the concern for chastity. Finally, the Master insists that the monks make their beds each time they rise from them.

Compared to this, Benedict's emphasis is rather different. True, there are reasons to think that chastity is still an issue. Sleeping in separate beds; clothed and girded; and with the elders stationed to watch the brothers—all of these at least hint at the sexual issue. But the fact that Benedict has completely eliminated the rather crude remarks of RM 11.118-119 indicates that he means to downplay this element.

Conversely, the question of rising for the Night Office becomes all the more paramount in RB 22. Fully half of the little chapter (vv. 5-8) has to do with the importance of being prepared for the Work of God, and the unforgettable little vignette at the end of the chapter seems to seal the matter: The picture of the veteran monks rousing the sleepy youngsters gently but firmly for Vigils is one of the most poignant pictures in the whole Rule.

The comment in 22.6 that they should virtually race each other to the Night Office also touches on a major theme of Benedict. In RB 43, he makes a rather elaborate attack on tardiness at the Divine Office. This could strike us as the fussing of a rigid personality that prizes efficiency over spirit, but it is really based on Benedict's conviction that everything in the monastic life depends on Good Zeal and a desire to please the Lord. See notes on 22.6.

It should be remembered that RB 22 follows closely on the section on the Divine Office. Admittedly, it also follows the chapter on the deans

(RB 21), but the role of the deans in RB 22 is not so much surveillance as encouragement for the brothers to put aside sleep and hasten with joy to the Work of God. If, as we have argued earlier (see *Index:* Vigils), the quintessential monastic Office is Vigils, which symbolizes faithful waiting for the eschatological Lord, then it seems that rising for Night Office is an important monastic act of faith.

B. The History of Monastic Sleeping Quarters

A. de Vogüé, 10.36-62, has surveyed the history of dormitories and found that they were by no means the norm in ancient monasticism. Of course, the anchorites by definition had their own cells, but the Egyptian cenobites also had at least semi-private rooms. Cassian (*inst*. 2.12-14) says that the cenobites spent a good deal of time in their cells, working and praying without ceasing. To his mind, the cell is the place where one must stay in order to work out one's salvation (*inst*. 10.3; *conf.* 24).

It is questionable how much Cassian knew about real cenobitism in Egypt, since he never visited the Pachomians in the far south of the country, but Pachomius, *pr.* 88; 95, also assumes that the monks live two or three to a cell. Although this is different from the strictly private cell, it is a far cry from the large, open dormitory of later times. What caused the change?

According to Vogüé, common labor and common Office gradually brought about the common dormitory for the monks. He admits that the dangers of avarice and lust were a drawback to the private cell, but he is sharply critical of the move from cell to dormitory. The reason is obvious: serious private prayer and *lectio divina* seem to demand at least rudimentary privacy of the kind only a cell can afford.

But the cell did not disappear quickly or easily. In the West, several monastic Rules, some even later than Benedict, still arrange for private cells. Thus Ferrandus, *vit. Fulg.* 43 and Aurelian, *reg. mon.* 8; 33 both prefer cells for the monks. But some of the Western Rules fight hard against cells. Caesarius, *reg. mon.* 3, forbids them because they promote avarice, and in *reg. virg.* 49, he says that cells tend to break down the barrier to the secular realm.

In one case, a specific move from cells to dormitory is recorded. At the monastery of Condat in the French Jura, a fire in the early sixth century destroyed the cells, so Abbot Eugendus decided to replace them with a common dormitory (*vit. patr. Jur*. 111.21). The chronicler says approvingly that Gallic weakness demanded the change, which probably means that the move was in some way practical. But Vogüé is suspicious: he thinks that long choir Offices and hard farm work had simply dulled the monks' taste for solitary prayer.

But the pressure for dormitories could also come from outside the monastic system itself. In the Emperor Justinian's Novella (decree) of 17 March 535, the cenobites of the empire are commanded to sleep in dormitories for the sake of chastity. The Master wrote just before this law was promulgated and Benedict probably wrote after it. By their time, the tide was definitely flowing against private cells for monks.

As a matter of fact, dormitories were the rule for most subsequent cenobitic history. Only in relatively modern times have the monks gone back to private cells, but the reason usually is not strictly contemplative: modern people simply need more privacy than can be found in a common dormitory. Yet the hope is that monks of our day will make good use of their blessed privacy to cultivate a rich life with God in prayer and *lectio.* For an interesting contemporary account of the modern return from dormitory to cell, see Bauer, 98–114.

XXIII: DE EXCOMMUNICATIONE CULPARUM

[1]Si quis frater contumax aut inoboediens aut superbus aut murmurans vel in aliquo contrarius exsistens sanctae regulae et praeceptis seniorum suorum contemptor repertus fuerit, [2]hic secundum Domini nostri praeceptum admoneatur semel et secundo secrete a senioribus suis. [3]Si non emendaverit, obiurgetur publice coram omnibus. [4]Si vero neque sic correxerit, si intellegit qualis poena sit, excommunicationi subiaceat; [5]sin autem improbus est, vindictae corporali subdatur.

RB 23: EXCOMMUNICATION FOR FAULTS

1. If any brother is found to be defiant or disobedient or arrogant or a murmurer, or if he is in any way opposed to the Holy Rule or disdains the directions of his seniors, 2. let him be admonished privately once and a second time by his seniors according to the command of our Lord. 3. If he does not change his ways, let him be publically upbraided in the presence of all. 4. If he still does not amend, and if he appreciates the penalty, let him undergo excommunication. 5. But if he is insensible to it, let him undergo physical punishment.

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ments for long periods of time, followed by public reconcilation. The monks are punished for lesser faults by exclusion from table, and for greater ones by expulsion from both table and choir. Only if they prove totally incorrigible are they expelled from the monastery (RB 28).

Holzherr, 175, points out that the Rule of Benedict is heavily marked by a penal atmosphere. Not only are there twelve chapters (23–30; 43–46) entirely devoted to penalties, but twenty-seven other chapters end with threats of punishment. Although the Rule of the Master is normally considered much more severe than RB, it cannot be said to be as interested in penalties. Holzherr thinks Benedict had to deal with a less civilized population. Perhaps the sternness is also a legacy of St. Basil, *reg.* 16; 17, who was concerned that every jot and tittle of the divine law be followed, and who demanded satisfaction for every infraction. See Gomez, 231–232; Veronese, 162.37-50.

1.

RB 23 begins with words identical to the beginning of RM 12 (up to *murmurans*), but then veers off in a slightly different direction. RM 12 is more narrowly focused on contempt for a *dean* (RM 11), and there is explicit reference back to that major treatise. Benedict takes a broader approach, probably because the deans are not as important in his schema. In both Rules, this chapter serves as an introduction to a considerable body of penal material (RM 12–16; RB 23–30; 43–46), sketching the parameters of punishment: who? by whom? for what? how?

All the faults listed in 23.1 have this in common: they are public offenses and they involve bad will. Nowhere in the penal chapters are objective offenses named, but rather attitudes that are unacceptable. Outside of the penal code, however, many concrete faults and offenses are named and reprobated: RB 32: damage to goods; 33: avarice; 34: murmuring due to envy; 42: violation of silence; 43: tardiness; 57: vanity of artists; 68–70: usurpation of power. The reprehensible attitudes listed in RB 23 are a virtual definition of what Benedict calls "bad zeal" in RB 72.1-2. Moreover, these are all social faults in that they corrode community life; therefore they must be dealt with by the public authority. See Manning, 3.74-75.

defiant (contumax) is also found in RB 62.11 and 71.9, where it describes one who refuses to accept correction.

murmurer (murmurans), one of Benedict's great dislikes. See *Index:* Murmur.

Holy Rule (sanctae regulae) could refer to this Rule or any monastic Rule. Unlike the Master, who considers himself divinely inspired (see

RM Prol 2), Benedict is usually quite diffident (see esp. RB 73). See *Index:* Rule.

disdains (contemptor). On the basis of 65.18, Lentini, 262, thinks "disdain" should go with "Holy Rule." Both he and Vogüé, 2.543, indicate by their translations that disdain, and not just opposition, is the factor that calls forth the punishment. While I agree with their principle, I think that *all* the bad traits mentioned in 23.1 are types of public defiance. Furthermore, I take *contrarius . . . regulae praeceptis . . . contemptor* as a balanced pair.

The language of 23.1 is reminiscent of many ancient Rules: Ps.-Macarius, *reg.* 12; *vit. Pach* 29; Pach. *pr.* 150; 165; Cassian, *inst.* 4.41,2.

2.

command of our Lord (Domini nostri praeceptum). To judge from the three warnings, Benedict has in mind Matthew 18:15. Matthew, however, has a graduated escalation of three warnings by one person, a small group and then the whole Church. RM 12.2 tells the deans to warn the culprit three times before telling the abbot.

3.

in the presence of all (coram omnibus). As he shows in 70.3, Benedict believes in the pedagogic value of public admonishment. The concept is found in 1 Timothy 5:20: "The ones who do commit sin, however, are to be publically reprimanded so that the rest may fear to offend" (NAB). In a "shame and honor" society such as prevailed, and still prevails, in the Mediterranean basin, such tactics were perfectly understandable (see B. Malina and J. Neyrey, 25–66). In his essay "Réflexions sur les Prisons des Ordres religieux," Jean Mabillon distinguishes between "inflictive" and "afflictive" punishments. The latter are strictly aimed at converting the individual, whereas the former are vindictive. In Mabillon's view, only afflictive punishments are proper to monastic life. See Kardong, 20.41.

5.

insensible (improbus). Although the classical meaning of *improbus* was invariably moral (OLD, s.v.), for Benedict this no longer seems to be the case. It is clear enough in this verse that the monk is beaten because he simply cannot understand any other language. In 52.3, the monk who disturbs the prayer of another is probably not doing so out of malice but out of insensitivity. Even in 2.28, where *RB 1980* thinks *improbus* means "evil," there is still room for a nonmoralistic interpretation (see note 2.28). Neither RM 2 nor RM 12 treats of monks so simple or rough they can only be held in check by physical means.

Whether this means that Benedict was more realistic or had a lower standard of acceptance is not clear. Although such a state of affairs is almost incomprehensible to the modern sensibility, the principle is still valuable: to be effective, punishment must deal with people as they actually are, not as one might wish or imagine them to be. See Kardong, 20.51. Although Basil is quite reticent about punishments, leaving everything to the discretion of the superior, he does note, *reg.* 194, that "age and education make a big difference" (Holzherr, 172). Early provincial Church councils also provided for corporal punishment for those who could not appreciate excommunication: Vannes, A.D. 465, ch. 13; Agde, A.D. 506, ch. 41; Epaon, A.D. 517, ch. 15 (*Concilia Galliae;* Holzherr, 173).

Even though the Master does not speak of people who can only understand a beating, this does not mean he is opposed to corporal punishment. Indeed, RM 13.68-70 has contumacious monks beaten "to the point of death" before being expelled! Other monastic Rules such as Ps.-Macarius, *reg*. 27, also recommend beatings where needed. Compared to a fierce Rule like that of Columbanus, Benedict is positively benign.

XXIV: QUALIS DEBET ESSE MODUS EXCOMMUNICATIONIS

[1]Secundum modum culpae, et excommunicationis vel disciplinae mensura debet extendi; [2]qui culparum modus in abbatis pendat iudicio.
[3]Si quis tamen frater in levioribus culpis invenitur, a mensae participatione privetur. [4]Privati autem a mensae consortio ista erit ratio ut in oratorio psalmum aut antiphonam non imponat, neque lectionem recitet, usque ad satisfactionem. [5]Refectionem autem cibi post fratrum refectionem solus accipiat, [6]ut, si verbi gratia fratres reficiunt sexta hora, ille frater nona, si fratres nona, ille vespera, [7]usque dum satisfactione congrua veniam consequatur.

RB 24: THE DEGREES OF EXCOMMUNICATION

1. The degree of excommunication and discipline ought to be commensurate with the seriousness of the fault. 2. The judgment of the gravity of faults depends on the abbot. 3. If, however, a brother is found to be guilty of minor faults, he should not be permitted to participate in the common meals.
4. For one who is excluded from sharing common meals, this will also mean that at the Divine Office he will not lead a psalm or antiphon, nor will he read a lesson, until he has made satisfaction. 5. As for his meal, he should take it alone after the brothers have taken theirs. 6.

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Thus, for example, if the brothers eat at the sixth hour, that brother will eat at the ninth; if the brothers eat at the ninth, he will eat in the evening, 7. until he obtains pardon through fitting satisfaction.

RB 24 Notes

T
Like many of Benedict's titles, this one is an interrogative: "What ought to be the degree of excommunication?" Verse 1 actually forms an answer to the question. This Q/A form derives from the Master, who couches every chapter as an answer to a question by disciples. I use the plural "degrees" because RB 24–25 discuss a two-tier system of minor and major faults and penalties.

1.
discipline (disciplinae) no doubt refers to the corporal punishment mentioned in 23.4-5 as an alternative to excommunication. One meaning of the modern word "discipline" is self-inflicted corporal punishment. See *Index:* Discipline.

2.
the abbot (abbatis) is in complete charge of the process of correction in RB, from the judgment about the gravity of the faults to the carrying out of the punishment. Correction is the abbot's right (see RB 70) and duty (2.23-29). This does not preclude his use of delegates (27.2) to facilitate the process.

3.
however (tamen). Even though the previous two verses seem to give the abbot absolute freedom to regulate punishment, Benedict still sets down a system based on light and serious faults, with their corresponding punishments. Yet we will see that he rarely specifies whether a given fault should be punished as light or serious.

common meals (mensae). For ancient people, sharing a meal was symbolic of common life and deep unity. Therefore, exclusion was no slight hardship. For Christians, the Eucharistic meal had additional significance as participation in the saving work of Christ and the divine life. Although Benedict says little or nothing about the Eucharist as such (see note 17.4 on *missas*), the whole atmosphere of the meals in RB (RB 35; 38–41) is sacramental.

participate (participatione). Cenobitic meals are not merely occasions for "feeding" but communal events in which members take an active share. They share more than food; they share their lives. To be excluded

from this participation is a form of death for those who value their place in the monastic body. See *Index:* Participate.

4.
sharing (consortio) is another intensively communal and relational word to describe cenobitic life. Manning, 76, emphasizes that the faults that Benedict condemns all damage *love;* therefore, the only meaningful punishment is to be excluded from that love. In fact, the chapters on punishment are some of the most salient ones for Benedictine community life. See previous note.

lead (imponat) could mean the introduction of a psalm or antiphon, or the solo performance of the same (44.6; 63.4; Lentini, 268; Vogüé, 2.545). The person barred from table is also precluded from a leading role in choir, though not from general participation. Just as the liturgy colors meals in RB, so the opposite is true (see previous note).

satisfaction (satisfactio). Unlike satisfaction for serious faults, that for slight faults ends with a mere gesture: the abbot says: "Enough" (see note 44.9-10).

5.
As for his meal (Refectionem autem cibi). Only now is the question of food even raised; up to this time it has been strictly a matter of exclusion from communal life. Just as in the general Benedictine system of fasting (RB 41), the culprit is not deprived of food, but eats later in the day.

6.
brother (frater) occurs five times in this short chapter. It is Benedict's preferred term for the monk, just as *discipulus* is for the Master. The latter implies a master, while the former implies a community. The high incidence of this term in the chapters of the penal code is another sign of the importance of community in this section of the Rule. See *Index:* Brother.

7.
fitting (congrua) could refer to the type of punishment or its length. Since there is no doubt of the former (exclusion from meals), it must have to do with length. The abbot is the judge of that (see RB 44).

XXV: DE GRAVIORIBUS CULPIS

[1]Is autem frater qui gravioris culpae noxa tenetur suspendatur a mensa, simul ab oratorio. [2]Nullus ei fratrum in nullo iungatur consortio nec in colloquio. [3]Solus sit ad opus sibi iniunctum, persistens in

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paenitentiae luctu, sciens illam terribilem apostoli sententiam dicentis [4]*traditum eiusmodi hominem in interitum carnis, ut spiritus salvus sit in die Domini.* [5]Cibi autem refectionem solus percipiat, mensura vel hora qua praeviderit abbas ei competere; [6]nec a quoquam benedicatur transeunte nec cibum quod ei datur.

RB 25: GRAVE FAULTS

1. But a brother who is judged guilty of a more serious fault should be excluded from both table and oratory. 2. No brother is to associate or converse with him in any fashion. 3. Let him work alone at what he is told to do, maintaining all the while a penitential sorrow. He should keep in mind that frightening saying of the Apostle: 4. *A man like that has been given over to fleshly destruction so that his soul might be saved on the day of the Lord.* 5. He must take his meals alone, with the abbot judging the amount of food and the time appropriate for his case. 6. No one passing by should bless him, nor the food given him.

RB 25 Notes

T

This title is not found in RM because the Master treats both light and grave faults under the same rubric in 13.60-73. Much of the RM penal code (12–15) is taken up with long, verbose speeches for the abbot to direct at those who are being punished. Benedict has abridged the material largely by eliminating those speeches.

1.

But (autem). Chapters beginning with *autem* are usually quarried from a larger block in RM (Vogüé, 2.546).

a more serious fault (gravioris culpae). It must be kept in mind that this is not a question of ecclesiastical excommunication for grave sins, but for monastic faults (esp. contumacy, see 23.1). In fact, Benedict avoids the term *excommunicare,* which is used in RM 13.62. Cassian gives us some idea of what early monks considered grave faults: unauthorized journeys; improper intimacies with women; open conflict (*inst.* 4.16,3).

guilty (noxa). *Noxa* is a noun, meaning "injury" (OLD, s.v.). Perhaps the author has omitted *in,* or maybe the expression is idiomatic.

2.

No brother (Nullus . . . fratrum). Again, the term "brother" has a prominent place, which makes the point all the more poignantly, since

brotherhood is prohibited. Repetition of *Nullus . . . nullo* (in any fashion) reinforces the prohibition (Lentini, 272).

3.

penitence (paenitentiae). Basil, *reg.* 50, cites 2 Corinthians 7:10 as a biblical formula for the necessity of penitence: "Godly grief produces a change of heart that leads to salvation." In that text, Paul is actually criticizing *worldly* grief, but the passage still proves a useful rationale for Christian discipline. Church penalties must aim toward conversion; they are never merely vindictive. See Kardong, 20.41. In this schema, conversion is basically a gift of God and beyond our control. What we can do is to prepare the ground of our heart by a penitential lifestyle *(paenitentiae luctus).* Here, of course, the culprit is forced into that mode of life.

work (opus). One of Jean Mabillon's criticisms of the monastic prisons of France (eighteenth century) was their utter *neglect* of the prisoners. Unlike even the civil prisoners, the monastic inmates had no decent work, exercise or reading material (Kardong, 20.52). Benedict, while conceiving of major excommunication as a penitential retreat *(in penitentiae luctu),* also makes sure that the person has a healthy outlet for energy in work. Needless to say, if this work is too engrossing, there will be little room for sorrow. See *Index:* Work.

fleshly destruction (interitum carnis). This Pauline quote seems rather harsh for a merely disciplinary (not moral) censure, but in fact Benedict has softened it considerably by omitting the words "to Satan"! In 1 Corinthians 5:5, Paul counsels exclusion of an incestuous man from the community, but even though his language is very strong, he still wants to bring the person to conversion. Likewise, Benedict prescribes social exclusion so as to excite spiritual reawakening. Taken for granted is the human need for community. Indeed, people in tribal societies are often so closely identified with the group that exclusion is tantamount to death. It is possible that Benedict used a biblical text that already omitted the shocking word *Satanae*. Augustine (*spec*. 31) avoids the same word, but Cassian transmits it with no qualms in *inst.* 2.16 (Vogüé, 1.142; 2.547). Lentini, 272, denies that Benedict drops the mention of Satan to avoid scandalizing the reader. Rather, he believes the whole idea of "abandonment" is downplayed because in fact the excommunicated monk is *not* simply gotten out of the way (RB 27). See Kardong, 10.8; 20.40-45.

5.

amount (mensura). Unlike the person merely barred from common meals (RB 24), the one under major penalty does not necessarily receive an ordinary portion. The abbot must decide if the fare is to be reduced. See *Index:* Measure.

appropriate to his case (conpetere ei). In the case of minor faults, the time for eating is set: three hours after the rest (RB 24). When the problem is more serious, though, then more weight is placed on the abbot's discretion.

6.

bless (benedicatur). The author may be playing on the double meaning of *benedicere,* which can signify a greeting or a blessing. In traditional societies, though, they were synonymous, for the typical greeting *was* a blessing, e.g., *shalom, Grüss Gott.* RB 63.15 tells the junior to ask for a blessing, but if the excommunicated person does so, he should not receive one (Lentini, 273). See *Index:* Bless.

the food (cibum). This sentence is grammatically anomalous since the subject shifts from the punished one to the passerby. I have amended the first half because it makes no great sense to tell the excommunicated person not to be blessed. Perhaps it means he should not *ask* for a blessing (see previous note). In the spirit of the previous verse ("that his soul might be saved"), it is hard to see why the food should not be blessed. But then it is also hard to see how exclusion from church or oratory would be beneficial.

XXVI: DE HIS QUI SINE IUSSIONE IUNGUNT SE EXCOMMUNICATIS

[1]Si quis frater praesumpserit sine iussione abbatis fratri excommunicato quolibet modo se iungere aut loqui cum eo vel mandatum ei dirigere, [2]similem sortiatur excommunicationis vindictam.

RB 26: THOSE WHO CONTACT THE EXCOMMUNICATED WITHOUT BEING TOLD TO DO SO

1. If any brother, without the abbot's command, presumes in any way to associate or speak with an excommunicated brother or to send him an order, 2. he shall undergo the same penalty of excommunication.

RB 26 Notes

T

Here again, Benedict has made a little chapter out of a mere remark of the Master (RM 13.54). The point is not permission (*pace* Vogüé, Holzherr, Salzburg, Schmitz, Steidle) but rather the lack of a positive mission to the excommunicated (27.2-4).

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without the abbot's command (sine jussione abbatis). The initiative comes from the abbot, not the brother.

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order (mandatum). The worry seems to be not so much that one monk will try to console another, but that he will take another under his tutelage (see RB 69–70). Another possibility could be "foot washing," but it is hard to see how one could "send" that action.

2.
excommunicated (excommunicatis). This no doubt pertains to major excommunication (RB 25) and not the lesser type. Since those who have committed lesser faults are free to participate in the Divine Office, it is hard to see how they could be socially avoided (Lentini, 274).

send (dirigere). Lentini, 274, thinks the emphasis is on epistolary contact; in my view the stress is on "order." Benedict has omitted RM 13.55-59, which explicitly states that the contact is for personal consolation. Apparently, he wishes to change the thrust of the material.

presumes (praesumpserit) is used here in the precise sense of usurpation. As Benedict sees it, the fault is not so much disruption of abstract justice but violation of the abbot's role as pastor of the monastic community. This keyword turns up mostly in sections that deal with the interrelations of the abbot and community. See Miquel, 2.424-436; see *Index:* Presumption.

XXVII: QUALITER DEBEAT ABBAS SOLLICITUS ESSE CIRCA EXCOMMUNICATOS

[1]Omni sollicitudine curam gerat abbas circa delinquentes fratres, quia *non est opus sanis medicus sed male habentibus.* [2]Et ideo uti debet omni modo ut sapiens medicus, immittere senpectas, id est seniores sapientes fratres, [3]qui quasi secrete consolentur fratrem fluctuantem et provocent ad humilitatis satisfactionem et *consolentur* eum *ne abundantiori tristitia absorbeatur,* [4]sed, sicut ait item apostolus, *confirmetur in eo caritas* et oretur pro eo ab omnibus.

[5]Magnopere enim debet sollicitudinem gerere abbas et omni sagacitate et industria currere, ne aliquam de ovibus sibi creditis perdat. [6]Noverit enim se infirmarum curam suscepisse animarum, non super sanas tyrannidem; [7]et metuat prophetae comminationem per quam dicit Deus: *Quod crassum videbatis assumebatis et quod debile erat proiciebatis.* [8]Et pastoris boni pium imitetur exemplum, qui, relictis nonaginta novem

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ovibus in montibus, abiit unam ovem quae erraverat quaerere; [9]cuius infirmitati in tantum compassus est, ut eam *in* sacris *humeris suis* dignaretur *imponere* et sic reportare ad gregem.

RB 27: THE ABBOT'S PREOCCUPATION WITH THE EXCOMMUNICATED

1. The abbot should focus all his attention on the care of wayward brothers, for *it is not the healthy but the sick who need a physician*. 2. Thus he should use all the means that a wise physician would. For example, he might send in *senpectae,* that is, wise, elderly brothers 3. who know how to comfort the wavering brother as if in secret. By this means, they can urge him to make humble satisfaction and also *console him so that he be not devoured by too much sorrow*.

4. But, as the Apostle likewise says, *let love for him be reaffirmed and let everyone pray for him*. 5. The abbot must indeed exercise very great care, and hasten with all keenness and energy to prevent any of the sheep in his care from being lost.

6. He should understand that he has undertaken to care for the weak and not to dominate the strong. 7. Let him fear the threat of the Prophet by whose mouth God says: *You took for yourselves what you saw was plump, but the feeble you threw out.* 8. Let him imitate the good shepherd's devoted example: He left the ninety-nine sheep in the hills to go looking for the one that had strayed. 9. He was so filled with sympathy at its weakness that *he* mercifully *placed it on his* sacred *shoulders* and carried it back to the flock.

RB 27 Notes

T

The title, as well as the whole chapter, is an original creation of Benedict. Indeed, it is one of the finest chapters in the whole Rule, a veritable treatise on true pastoral leadership and the care of souls.

preoccupied (sollicitus). The contents of the chapter show that a strong translation is needed here. One hesitates to use "anxious," because RB 64.16 expressly warns the abbot against that. Yet "concerned" seems a bit weak. The burden of the chapter is that a troubled member is not a distraction to the "real" business of the abbot; as for Jesus before him (27.1), the troubled soul *is* the abbot's business. See *Index:* Care.

1.

all his attention (omni sollicitudine). Because excommunication removes the culprit from sight, it is all the more necessary that he be kept

in mind (Lentini, 276). That means that excommunication is not just a clever administrative technique to cosmetically remove troublesome monks from the scene. It also stands as a warning against the temptation to assign problematic members to missions distant from the monastery.

physician (medicus). As we will see, Benedict has a certain proclivity for medical language, but the primary reference is to Jesus, who identified himself as a physician in Matthew 9:12. Apparently the parallel passage in RM is 14.12, where it occurs in a speech concocted for the penitent to deliver when begging pardon. Placed on the tongue of the "sick person," the image becomes unconvincing and awkward. Benedict addresses RB 27 to the *abbot* and not the troubled monk, just as much of the gospel seems aimed at Christian leaders.

Holzherr, 179, gives the following references that speak of the medicinal quality of monastic leadership and counseling: Basil, *reg.* 23; *vit. patr.* 5.5,4; 5.10,84. These sources were familiar to Benedict.

2.

use all the means (uti omni modo). Another possibility would be "behave like a wise physician" (Lentini, 277). As Vogüé, 2.548, notes, *uti* with an object (*ferro* = iron) is found in 28.6. Actually, RB 28 seems to be a much better example of "all means" than 27.2-3.

for example. Since the case given here is not "all means," but only one means, I read it as an example. In general, 27.2-3 is so highly charged with dramatic tension that it seems to call for an especially nuanced translation. Much depends on the presuppositions of the translator.

send in (inmittere) can have the nuance of secrecy or insinuation (Lentini, 277).

senpectae is one of the most controverted words in the entire Rule. Apparently it is a traditional role that Benedict employs, but because the word is strange he feels he must explain it. In doing so, he chooses a similar-sounding (and plausible) term, *seniores*. That is what he intends *senpectae* to mean and in a sense that is all we need to know. Yet curiosity finds it hard to stop there. Already in the late fourth century, Palladius, *hist. Laus*. 37, used *sumpaictès,* which was glossed "the congregation of elders." If that is the meaning, then Benedict has guessed right (the assumption here is that Benedict knew no Greek). Recently, though, quite a different possibility has been proposed by Molland, 273–296. He thinks that *senpectae* is connected to *sinapis* = mustard, to give us "mustard plaster." This carries on the medical image from 27.2, but seems unnecessary in the face of Benedict's own explanation. It seems that the abbot sends other monks as mediators either because (1) he himself is

not personally well-suited to help the brother, or (2) a less authoritative person might ease the tension and break through the impasse.

3.

as if in secret (quasi secrete). One gets the impression that there is some sort of ruse involved. Apparently the culprit is to think the seniors are visiting on their own, whereas the reader knows they are mediators sent by the abbot. Palladius also uses *sumpaictès* to mean a collaborator in a ruse, in fact to trick someone into conversion (*hist. Laus*. 83; Lentini, 278). As for RB 27, we should remember that confreres were strictly forbidden to visit the excommunicated (RB 26). It seems the rules are being violated in the name of love.

wavering (fluctuantem) is not equivalent to "erring," but poised between mulishness and docility. The abbot discerns that the decisive moment has arrived, so some special effort must be made to convince the troubled brother.

too much sorrow (abundantiori tristitia). Sorrow in itself (see 25.3) is desirable, even necessary, for conversion, but excessive sorrow is counterproductive if it leads to despair. Normally, Benedict wants his monks to avoid saddening *(contristare)* one another. In fact, he never employs *tristitia* to mean salutary sorrow for sin. See *Index:* Sadness.

urge (provocent). The *senpectae* are not cronies who corroborate the excommunicated in their recalcitrance, but true brothers who seek to move them to conversion. Cassian, *inst.* 9.11, remarks, just as Benedict does in the next verse, that holy sorrow stems "from the love of God" (Holzherr, 180).

4.

pray for him (pro eo ab omnibus). In RM 15.26, the prayer is a sort of public novena, and it is accompanied by fasting.

reaffirmed (confirmetur), that is, the excommunicated must be made to understand that his punishment does not put an end to the love of the community for him. On the contrary, it is questionable whether anyone can be converted *except* by love, i.e., the knowledge that one is loved.

5.

This verse bears a strong resemblance to 27.1, with its theme of abbatial responsibility for the troubled. Now, however, the image is the divine shepherd and not the physician. Borias, 10.277, thinks that RB 27.1 and 5 form an inclusion, with vv. 6-9 added later. Another scenario would have 6-9 added to the original unit 1-4, since 6-9 seems to be a commentary on v. 5.

hasten (currere) may be a scribe's mistake for *curare,* or a play on that word from v. 1. Even though it is hard to translate *currere* literally (= run) due to the accompanying adverbials, yet it is not hard to imagine a shepherd running to prevent danger to one of his flock. Moreover, running is a frequent metaphor in RB for spiritual striving. Certainly the frantic running of the abbot to save a monk from the wolf gives us an authority-picture at total variance from all passivity and arrogance. Kardong, 6.164-165; see *Index:* Running.

keenness (sagacitate). The root meaning is "keenness of scent" (OLD, s.v.), which heightens the image of the shepherd as totally alert to all threats to the flock.

sheep in his care (de ovibus sibi creditis) occurs in 2.39 as well, but the abbot-as-shepherd is not a frequent image in RB.

6.

undertaken (suscepisse) could also be translated "received." In any case, the abbot's role is clearly defined and not simply what the incumbent chooses to make of it. See *Index:* Accept.

weak (infirmarum). The point is not so much that the abbot should pay attention to the weakest members of the community at the expense of the "strong." Rather, every member is a forgiven sinner in more or less need of assistance on the way to salvation. The abbot should not complain if his time is taken up with the concerns of the troubled and wounded rather than with great works of religion and culture. In 64.19, Benedict creates a memorable dictum on the subject: challenge the strong, but do not crush the weak. "Weakness" also refers to personal quirks which may either amuse or madden our neighbors. See Kardong, 3.107-110; see *Index:* Weakness.

8.

devoted (pium). The term is usually reserved to God (Blaise, s.v.; see Prol 1,38). Most translators read it to mean "loving," but the word does not refer so much to feeling as to duty. In this case, the duty is to the one endangered member. See *Index:* Devoted.

good shepherd (pastoris boni). The shepherd pictured in 8-9 is a composite made up chiefly of Luke 15:4-5, with touches from John 10:11 (good) and Matthew 18:12 (hills), plus heightened coloring by Benedict. RM 14.7-19 puts the description ingratiatingly into the mouth of the monk begging pardon from the abbot. See *Index:* Shepherd.

ninety-nine (nonaginta novem). From the standpoint of ordinary animal husbandry and common sense, this behavior is at best risky and

at worst irrational. The reader must remember, however, that for the Christian, the parables of Jesus judge common sense and are not judged by it. He himself took great risks in reaching out to the "untouchables" in his society, and he paid with his life.

Origen, who could be very hard on bishops, reminds them that they are the "eye" of the Church body, which means they must be on the lookout for dangers to the other members. He adds that Christ left the ninety-nine (angels) in heaven to come to earth for one sinner (*hom. 7 in Jes. Nav.* 6; Holzherr, 181).

9.

Benedict has intensified the dramatic poignancy of Luke's marvelous little parable, which is already powerful in its own right. He has added subtle touches, most of which already appeared in patristic writings.

mercifully (dignaretur) is a rather cool word for such a warm passage. All commentators give the word an emotional cast. Literally, it means "he was willing to. . . ."

so filled with sympathy (in tantum compassus). See Hebrews 4:15: That was because he himself became human.

placed it on his sacred shoulders and carried it back to the flock (in sacris humeris suis . . . imponere et sic reportare ad gregem). A theme not found in Luke 15, but in Celestine I, *ep. ad Cyr.* 11, and Leo I, *ep.* 53.3. One of the typical pictures from the early catacombs is the youthful Christ as a shepherd with a sheep draped over his shoulders.

The contemporary *vit. patr. Jur.*, 79–81, contains a touching story of the abbot-shepherd Lupicinus. One night he heard two monks plotting to flee the monastery. In his anguish, he cried out: "If you are going, at least give me a kiss!" They changed their plans, and he, for his part, saw that their sorrow was sufficient punishment (Holzherr, 181).

XXVIII: DE HIS QUI SAEPIUS CORREPTI EMENDARE NOLUERINT

[1]Si quis frater frequenter correptus pro qualibet culpa, si etiam excommunicatus non emendaverit, acrior ei accedat correptio, id est ut verberum vindicta in eum procedant. [2]Quod si nec ita correxerit, aut forte—quod absit—in superbia elatus etiam defendere voluerit opera sua, tunc abbas faciat quod sapiens medicus: [3]si exhibuit fomenta, si unguenta adhortationum, si medicamina scripturarum divinarum, si ad ultimum ustionem excommunicationis vel plagarum virgae, [4]et iam

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si viderit nihil suam praevalere industriam, adhibeat etiam—quod maius est—suam et omnium fratrum pro eo orationem, [5]ut Dominus qui omnia potest operetur salutem circa infirmum fratrem. [6]Quod si nec isto modo sanatus fuerit, tunc iam utatur abbas ferro abscisionis, ut ait apostolus: *Auferte malum ex vobis*, [7]et iterum: *Infidelis, si discedit, discedat*, [8]ne una ovis morbida omnem gregem contagiet.

RB 28: THOSE WHO DESPITE FREQUENT PUNISHMENTS REFUSE TO CHANGE

1. If a brother has been punished often for some fault, and if he does not change, even after excommunication, one should apply a harsher punishment to him: that is, he should be beaten with rods. 2. But if he still does not improve or if, God forbid, he even tries in his arrogance to defend his actions, then the abbot should proceed like a wise physician: 3. When he has furnished poultices, the oil of encouragement, the medicine of Holy Scripture, and finally, the cautery of excommunication and whipping, 4. and if he sees that his efforts have accomplished nothing, let him try a still greater thing: he and all the brothers should pray 5. that the Lord, who can do all things, will heal the troubled brother. 6. But if even this is not enough to heal him, then the time has come for the abbot to use the amputating knife, as the Apostle says: *Expel the evil one from your midst*. 7. And again, *If the unbeliever wishes to depart, let him depart*. 8. For one sick sheep should not be allowed to infect the whole flock.

RB 28 Notes

T

This chapter, like the one preceding it, is addressed to the abbot. It urges him to use every possible means to convert and heal a troubled member. But it also deals with the limiting case: some people cannot or will not amend their ways. This is a warning to the abbot that he is no miracle-worker. He must pray for divine aid (v. 4) and if all else fails, he may have to dismiss the brother (vv. 7-8; Holzherr, 183).

1.

Benedict seems here to alter his approach to punishment enunciated in RB 2.27-29. There he reserves blows for the "negligent and disdainful," but wants to persuade the sensitive and intelligent. In RB 23, beatings are used for those who cannot appreciate the suffering of excommunication. Here, though, blows are used after excommunication has failed to produce lasting amendment. It seems as if the principle of understanding

has been abandoned. This may simply show that Benedict *has* no abiding system of correction. Or it could mean that all systems tend to crumble in the face of incorrigibility. See Gomez, 241–244.

2.

wise (sapiens) as in 27.2 has the implication of practical wisdom based on experience. More than in modern high tech medicine, ancient physicans had to rely on intuitive insight based on accumulated practice. Likewise, biblical wisdom is never theoretical, but always in the service of a life pleasing to God. See *Index:* Wisdom.

poultices (fomenta) could be connected with *senpectae* (see note 27.2), but Vogüé, 2.552, thinks not, because that remedy should be tried *after* excommunication. But that is to assume an orderliness and coherence in Benedict's penal thinking which is just not there. In fact, I suspect he is intentionally disruptive of any tidy schemes in this matter (see notes 27.2-3; 28.4). Since all the following medical images are explained, Lentini, 284, thinks *fomenta* has lost its (much-needed) explanation. In Cassian's *inst*. 10.7, where the remedies for *acedia* are discussed, the poultices of verbal, fraternal praise are the first step. It is hard to see how this differs from *adhortationes* (next member).

oil (unguenta). Both *fomenta* and *unguenta* are external remedies, whereas *medicimina* is internal. The latter could be biblical meditations that convert the excommunicated (Lentini, 284).

cautery (ustionem). In the days before penicillin and antibiotics, cautery was an attempt to halt infection. Brutal though it was, it was preferable to gangrene and death.

While we may have difficulty understanding the logic of this series, or the meaning of its details, the flow of the argument toward expulsion is unmistakable. Moreover, the medical approach to this question was a commonplace in the early Church. Origen (*hom. 7 in Jes. Nav.* 6) already employs it, followed by Ambrose, *off*. 2.135 and *vit. patr*. 5.5,4; 5.10,85.

4.

At this point, Benedict employs a very effective rhetorical strategem, namely, a surprising climax. The usual metaphorical image was that of increasingly harsh medical procedures culminating in amputation (see Origen, previous note). Benedict interrupts that logic with a call for prayer. Now, surely, they have prayed for him before this! Perhaps, but Benedict wants to make sure that the spiritual element is not forgotten, and that a kind of inexorable legal process does not take over. It is also arguable that the reference here is to a kind of storm-novena as described in RM 14.25-32 (Veronese, 64–67). See *Index:* Prayer.

6.

After his surprising "excursus" on prayer in 28.4, Benedict returns to the traditional wisdom: if all else fails, the incorrigible member must be expelled. This was the practice of the Church throughout its whole history before Benedict: 1 Corinthians 5:13; Origen, note 28.3; Ambrose, same note. When feudalism prevented monasteries from expelling very troublesome members, the result was the grotesque institution of monastic prisons. See Kardong, 20.45-57.

In 1 Corinthians 5:13, Paul urges the Corinthians not to tolerate evil behavior by Church members. Quoting Deuteronomy 17:7, he demands that such persons be expelled from membership.

7.

This biblical "proof" does not fit the case as well as the previous one, since it does not involve expulsion of a Christian for intolerable sins. Rather, Paul considers the unbelieving spouse of a Christian convert free to remarry, due to the difficulty of mixed marriages. By implication, the Christian convert is also free to take a Christian spouse. This so-called "Pauline privilege" has been used by the Church ever since. As far as I can see, its only application here is that it shows that there are some values higher than the bonds created between persons: e.g., faith is higher than marriage vows. The corollary is that the spiritual health of the monastic community is worth more than the promises of one of its members.

The famous Matthean warrant for expulsion was well known to the cenobitic legislators: "He is no longer part of your community, since he is for you as a heathen or publican" (18:15): Basil, *reg*. 73; three warnings before dismissal (Matt 18:15-17): Augustine, *reg. serv.* 4.8-9. In RB 23, Benedict uses this text for *internal* excommunication, but not expulsion.

8.

In 61.7, we see the same solution of departure to prevent contagion. The image of a diseased sheep infecting the whole flock was very common among patristic writers: Origen (note 28.3); Cyprian, *ep*. 59.15; *de hab. virg*. 17; Augustine, *reg. serv.* 11.111-112; Vincent of Lérins, *com*. 1.8; Justinian, *nov*. 133.5; Ps.-Basil, *admon*. 18; *reg. or.* 35; Jerome, *ep*. 2.1; 16.1; 130.19. Indeed, both RB 27 and 28 are saturated with literary allusions.

XXIX: SI DEBEANT FRATRES EXEUNTES DE MONASTERIO ITERUM RECIPI

[1]Frater qui proprio vitio egreditur de monasterio, si reverti voluerit, spondeat prius omnem emendationem pro quo egressus est, [2]et sic in ultimo gradu recipiatur, ut ex hoc eius humilitas comprobetur. [3]Quod si denuo exierit, usque tertio ita recipiatur, iam postea sciens omnem sibi reversionis aditum denegari.

RB 29: READMITTANCE OF THOSE BROTHERS WHO LEAVE THE MONASTERY

1. When a brother leaves the monastery through his own fault, should he wish to return, he must first promise to thoroughly correct the fault that caused his departure. 2. And so let him be taken back in the last place, to test his humility. 3. If he leaves again, he should be received back up to three times. After that, he should know that all possibility of return will be denied him.

RB 29 Notes

T

The Latin title leaves it in doubt whether a monk ought to be accepted back into the monastery after departure. The interrogative titles in RB, which have been transposed in this translation, are generally derived from RM, where they are a regular part of a dialogue between disciple and master. The prototype here is RM 64, which says substantially the same thing as RB 29. Although RM 64 is placed in the section on traveling monks, Benedict has wisely moved it to the unit on corrections (Manning, 3.88). Since the chapter follows so closely on Benedict's treatment of expulsion (28.7-8), it is easy to misunderstand RM 29 as part of that subject, but it actually concerns monks who leave on their own volition. Many mss add "or is expelled," showing that the chapter was misunderstood all along.

Lentini, 291, thinks that the fact that this chapter concerns those who leave voluntarily does not thereby preclude the readmission of one expelled for incorrigibility. The shock of a change of environment may turn him around as it did the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32.

1.

fault (vitio). At the time of Benedict, *any* departure from the monastery was considered scandalous and evil. This is clear from 58.28, where it is

ascribed to the devil's suggestion (see Kardong, 10.3-11). In more recent times, a monk could receive a Roman dispensation from his vows, but departure was still considered shameful. Since Vatican II, a broader perspective has prevailed, but leaving is never easy. To those who yearn for the former strictness, it need only be pointed out that the tragic institution of monastic prisons was purely the byproduct of an absolute refusal to allow monks to return to lay-life (see Kardong, 20 passim).

to correct the fault that caused his departure (emendationem pro quo egressus est). *RB 1980,* citing L. Traube, prefers "amends for leaving," eliminating the need to supply "the fault that caused," which is not in the Latin. The weakness of this solution is that it must supply "satisfaction," for *emendatio* demands a fault to be eliminated. *RB 1980* simply replaces correction with satisfaction.

2.
the last place (in ultimo gradu). Neither this stipulation nor the promise of the previous verse are required by RM 64, but Pachomius, *pr*. 136, has the same requirement. This regulation only acquires its full weight when one realizes the great importance the ancients placed on *rank* in community (see RB 63). See *Index:* Rank.

3.
up to three times (usque tertio). The Cluniac customary permitted the abbot to exceed even this limit, but such vagrancy is too disruptive of community (Lentini, 290). It might be added that the Church, basing herself on Matthew 18:22 (70 x 7), does not limit the number of times sins may be forgiven.

XXX: DE PUERIS MINORI AETATE, QUALITER CORRIPIANTUR

[1]Omnis aetas vel intellectus proprias debet habere mensuras. [2]Ideoque, quotiens pueri vel adulescentiores aetate, aut qui minus intellegere possunt quanta poena sit excommunicationis, [3]hi tales dum delinquunt, aut ieiuniis nimiis affligantur aut acris verberibus coerceantur, ut sanentur.

RB 30: PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

1. Every age and mentality should have an appropriate regimen.
2. Therefore, as regards children or youths, or those who have little

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RB 30: PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

1. Every age and mentality should have an appropriate regimen.
2. Therefore, as regards children or youths, or those who have little

understanding of the gravity of excommunication, 3. when such people misbehave, they should be deprived of food or pressured with sharp blows to correct them.

RB 30 Notes

T

children (pueris minori aetate). RB 59 will explain how such children came to be residents of the monastery. According to RM 14.79, the upper age limit for *pueri* was fifteen years, but the term varies greatly throughout Latin literature (see Boswell, 26–39). Elsewhere, Benedict sometimes calls them *infantes* (e.g., 31.9; 37.1; 45.3). See *Index:* Child.

1.

mentality (intellectus). Unlike RM 14.79-86, the main issue in this chapter is really not age, but understanding. This, of course, is a principle that Benedict stresses not just here but in 2.12,25 and 23.4-5. The concept is not from Cassian or the Master.

2.

youths (adulescentiores). In 63.18, this group is also mentioned along with the *pueri*. Since the real point of the chapter seems to be understanding, it is not too important to demarcate the age groups.

gravity (quanta poena) is an experiential term here and not a matter of abstract understanding. Only the person who feels a need to be with other people will find excommunication "grave." In RM 14.79-86, such a penalty is presented as one for the mind, while blows are aimed at the body. While excommunication certainly takes longer than beating, and provokes reflection, it is *not* just an intellectual suffering. What could be more painful for a ten-year-old than to be cut off from the gang, and for a fifteen-year-old than to be separated from peers? Some non-European cultures, such as the Plains Indians, discipline children by ignoring them, not beating them. See *Index:* Discipline.

3.

to correct them (ut sanentur). "Correction" is one possible meaning of *sanare,* but we should not forget the primary meaning of healing. As the last word of the penal unit, RB 23–30, the term is significant. Christian discipline is strictly aimed at salvation, not vindication.

fasts, blows (jejuniis, verberibus). Benedict's theory of child discipline may seem harsh, for he has even added fasts to RM 14.79-86. Yet this in no way suggests a lack of tenderness for the young. If such were the case, he would not admit child oblates to his monastery (RB 59), nor

arrange for a specially mitigated diet for them. In fact, his sympathy for children was exceptional. See Boswell, passim.

RB 23–30 Overview

Probably no section of Benedict's Rule is less attractive to modern eyes than the part on penalties. There may not be a single monastery in the world today that carries out literally his prescriptions for punishing monks. Indeed, the whole question of corporate discipline in monasteries is very difficult in an age of extreme individualism. Nevertheless, a careful study of the Penal Code of RB 23–30 has much to say about Benedictine community and leadership.

A. Discipline in the Early Church

In the first centuries of the Church, penance for sin was a public, corporate act. Those members of the Church who committed serious sins were formally excluded from Church life for rather lengthy periods of time. If they showed themselves repentant, they were also received back into the body of the faithful in a public liturgy. The *excommunicated* were received back into *communion.*

Obviously, that was a very different system than the present one of private confession. For one thing, only the most serious sins (murder, apostasy, idolatry, adultery) were punishable by excommunication. But the key element was the communal consciousness of the members. In the early days of Christianity, people cared so much about their membership in the body of Christ that exclusion was a very painful experience. Without that basic precondition, excommunication is a meaningless penalty.

As the Church became less of an elite cadre and more of a massive cultural institution, the old system of public penance gradually gave way to private confession. By the time of St. Benedict, it is probable that the practice of excommunication had virtually disappeared from the Great Church. Therefore, its use in the cenobitic monasteries must not have been easy to enforce. In fact, it is doubtful whether Benedict's penitential regulations ever were carried out on a wide scale. That is unfortunate, for they are certainly preferable to many other penitential practices recorded in Church history. See Lawlor, 704–705.

B. Pre-Benedictine Monastic Penance

All cenobitic communities must have ways to deal with harmful behavior by the members. The earliest monastic Rule, namely, that of Pachomius, prescribes a penalty of exclusion from common life for the

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Probably no section of Benedict's Rule is less attractive to modern eyes than the part on penalties. There may not be a single monastery in the world today that carries out literally his prescriptions for punishing monks. Indeed, the whole question of corporate discipline in monasteries is very difficult in an age of extreme individualism. Nevertheless, a careful study of the Penal Code of RB 23–30 has much to say about Benedictine community and leadership.

A. Discipline in the Early Church

In the first centuries of the Church, penance for sin was a public, corporate act. Those members of the Church who committed serious sins were formally excluded from Church life for rather lengthy periods of time. If they showed themselves repentant, they were also received back into the body of the faithful in a public liturgy. The *excommunicated* were received back into *communion.*

Obviously, that was a very different system than the present one of private confession. For one thing, only the most serious sins (murder, apostasy, idolatry, adultery) were punishable by excommunication. But the key element was the communal consciousness of the members. In the early days of Christianity, people cared so much about their membership in the body of Christ that exclusion was a very painful experience. Without that basic precondition, excommunication is a meaningless penalty.

As the Church became less of an elite cadre and more of a massive cultural institution, the old system of public penance gradually gave way to private confession. By the time of St. Benedict, it is probable that the practice of excommunication had virtually disappeared from the Great Church. Therefore, its use in the cenobitic monasteries must not have been easy to enforce. In fact, it is doubtful whether Benedict's penitential regulations ever were carried out on a wide scale. That is unfortunate, for they are certainly preferable to many other penitential practices recorded in Church history. See Lawlor, 704–705.

B. Pre-Benedictine Monastic Penance

All cenobitic communities must have ways to deal with harmful behavior by the members. The earliest monastic Rule, namely, that of Pachomius, prescribes a penalty of exclusion from common life for the

sin of slander, and especially for contumacious refusal to amend (*pr. et jud.* 1). Obdurate resistance to correction will always be seen as the worst sin by cenobitic legislators, since humility and obedience are the cornerstones of this form of monastic life. John Cassian, *inst.* 16,2-3, introduces a two-level system of monastic penances. For minor faults, he requires prostration during the Choir Office, but for more serious faults he calls for beating or expulsion. Because Cassian does not have much experience of true cenobitism, he does not seem to know about *internal* excommunication.

That practice is the heart of the penal system of the Rule of the Master. In RM 12–14, the Master arranges for those who commit serious faults to be excluded from the Divine Office and from meals. Notice, though, that this is quite different from being barred from the sacraments for mortal sins in ecclesiastical excommunication. Nevertheless, the Master does expel the monk from the monastery if he does not repent within three days.

If three days seems like a short time for conversion, then it should be noted that the Master does not seem to be so interested in human healing as he does in efficiency. The impression one gets from RM 12–14 is that of a rush to closure. The important thing is to wrap up the case and have an elaborate liturgy of reconciliation. Long, boring speeches are prepared for both the abbot and the penitent, speeches that take for granted the good will of the latter. If this is not immediately forthcoming, the Master flies into a rage: have the wretch beaten half to death and expelled (13.68)! This has to be one of the worst verses in a Rule that abounds in embarrassments.

Unlike John Cassian, the Master pays little attention to minor faults. Although RM 13.60-61,66-67 and 73.17-18 do mention exclusion from table as a penalty for slight violations, Vogüé, 5.727-732, thinks these are later interpolations which Benedict may not have seen in the version of RM that he used as a source. Indeed, the Master's Penal Code is a rather disorderly affair, perhaps because his practice was incoherent.

C. Benedict's Penal Code

For his part, Benedict has created a more orderly system of penalties. These comprise no less than twelve chapters in the Rule, 23–30 and 43–46. Benedict has happily eliminated the interminable speeches of RM 12–14 and created a much more substantive body of material. The alert reader will at once note the strange gap between 23–30 (punishment) and 43–46 (reconciliation). Although we are not sure why Benedict has separated these two large blocs of material, the effect is dramatic. It leaves the hard cases of RB 28 and 29 unresolved, and therefore they

must be taken very seriously (Vogüé 5.840-841). We will reserve our comments on reconciliation for the commentary on RB 43–46.

In RB 23–26, Benedict proceeds in an unusually neat and orderly fashion. First, he sets down a basic procedure for correcting faults, based on Matthew 18:15: the elders admonish the culprit twice, then the abbot does so publically. If this does not bring results, one proceeds to punishment (RB 23). For some reason, Benedict first takes up the slight penalty for minor faults, namely, exclusion from table (RB 24). Since Benedict treats the communal meal as a virtual sacrament, and given the usual Church practice of exclusion from the Eucharist, it is easy to see the logic of this penalty (see note 24.3). But minor excommunication is not meant to exclude the person from common life. Indeed, one still attends the Divine Office, but may not take a leading role in it.

For more serious faults, however, the penalty becomes more severe. Now the culprit is barred from both table and choir (RB 25), and there is to be no social contact with him (RB 26). Even though this is a domestic form of excommunication, and the faults in question are rarely great public sins, nevertheless, for a person who loves community life, this is a very heavy form of punishment. In fact, this part of RB is entirely based on the great value of community life, which is reflected in the vocabulary that is employed (see notes on *frater* 24.6; *participatio* 25.3, 30.2; *consortio* 24.4, and also notes 24.3,4).

Clearly, Benedict has structured his material much more neatly than the Master, but the differences run even deeper than that. This can be seen in the basic philosophy of the two Rules in regard to punishment. The Master is mostly concerned with retribution or the satisfaction of the abstract claims of justice (*merito* 14.82; *injuste* 14.86). Nor is he above a certain vindictive approach to punishment. Benedict seems much more pastoral in his attitude toward discipline (see note 30.3; Gomez, 238). His concern is for the healing and salvation of the person, rather than the claims of the law. He knows that the real task of discipline is to change the thinking of the culprit. The challenge is to move the person to sorrow for the fault (see notes 25.3; 27.2). That is the meaning of *emendatio* over against *satisfactio* (see note 29.1).

Now, in order to influence a person, one must employ a pedagogical approach based on sound principles (see note 23.3). One of the basic skills of a good teacher is to understand the nature of the pupil. The abbot is dealing with distinct individuals, and when it comes to discipline, he must take into account the character of the person to be helped. Benedict has made a major statement to this effect in RB 2.23-32, which must be applied to all questions of serious discipline (Gomez, 241).

On the other side of the ledger, effective human discipline depends entirely on the understanding of the subject: To profit from discipline,

people need to understand the meaning of what they are experiencing. Therefore, Benedict insists that excommunication only be applied to those who understand and appreciate it (see notes on 23.5; 30.1). In contrast, the Master has a rigid, abstract standard: those up to age fifteen are to be whipped; for those beyond that age, excommunication is the procedure.

D. The Pastoral Activity of the Abbot

Perhaps nowhere in his Rule does Benedict transcend his literary predecessor so much as in RB 27. The case is that of a monk who remains unrepentant in his excommunication. It is probably something the Master could not even imagine, much less cope with (see RM 13.68-75), but Benedict does not flinch from these hard cases. His solution is equally foreign to the Master, namely, to stress the pastoral responsibility of the abbot and to encourage him to take on the servant-Christ attitudes of the gospel (see notes 27.1,5,6).

In the first part of RB 27, the model is the divine physician. This role will be expanded in RB 28, but here he gives one example of how a truly wise spiritual doctor might proceed with a very difficult case of monastic rebellion: he could enlist mediators. It is easy to miss the subtlety of this solution, for it implies that the abbot may have to admit that when thwarted, he is powerless to help a given person. The temptation could be to revert immediately to power and authority, but the better approach might be to proceed humbly. We will say more about this in Part G, below.

The second part of RB 27 (5-9) is equally surprising. Now the abbot is to emulate Christ the shepherd. But this is not the stately shepherd whom the sheep dutifully follow through thick and thin. This is the shepherd who must go in search of the stray sheep, even daring to leave the ninety-nine in the hills (see note 27.7). In contrast, the abbot in RM 12–14 waits for the penitent monk to come crawling to him (Gomez, 252).

RB 27.5-9 is one of the most evocative passages in the entire Rule. It does not hesitate to use rather dramatic language to describe the abbot's quest for the lost sheep (*currere, sagacitas,* see notes for 27.5). Furthermore, Benedict enhances Luke 15:4-6 with deft brushstrokes of color. In comparison, the Master virtually squanders the same parable in 14.7. In general, Benedict employs biblical citations much more effectively in his Penal Code than the Master does. See *Index:* Scripture.

Certainly it can be said that RB 27 is one of the most satisfying chapters of the Rule. One reason for this is that the case ends well: the sheep is found, the monk is converted. But the lesson is deeper than that.

This chapter is aimed at all monastic and ecclesiastical leaders. It tells them it is not enough to impose strict discipline on people. True pastoral care requires that authority *care for* those it must discipline (see note 27T). The temptation is to remove troublesome people from the scene, on the principle that out of sight is out of mind. This merely results in neglect, which is a very serious sin. In an age like ours, which is squeamish about all forms of discipline, the net result may be gross neglect of persons. To enter into discipline *with* someone is to get involved, and that is what we least want to do. See Kardong, 20.56-57.

E. The Treatment of the Recidivist

A second original creation of Benedict within the Penal Code does not end so well. RB 28 has to do with the recidivist, the person who falls back into the same faults and sins after punishment. This is not just a matter of failing to heed a warning; it is the repetition of intolerable behavior (see notes 28T, 28.1).

To illustrate the treatment of such people, Benedict uses the imagery of a checklist of medical procedures. Perhaps this is an extension of RB 27.1-5, but it is more likely that that passage is an expansion of this list. At any rate, the impression one gets from RB 28 is indeed somber, for this is not a mere series of placebos, but of rather violent interventions such as cautery and amputation.

Of course, part of the problem is cultural. To us, ancient medicine was hopelessly crude and benighted. We have perfected the medical arts to such a high degree that prescientific medicine seems more like torture than cure. Yet RB 28 is not just tough, it is tragic. That is because it is willing to contemplate the worst-case scenario, the monk who will not or cannot reform. Then, says Benedict, one proceeds to amputation. There is no sentimentalism here. When every means has been taken to effect reformation, then one must protect the community and expel the offender.

This, of course, is very serious business and the dangers of error are great. All of us, including abbots, are sinners who easily slip into a vindictive mode. Therefore, it is imperative that RB 64.11-14 be kept in mind when members of the community need to be disciplined:

> "He must hate faults but love the brothers. When he must punish them, he should use prudence and avoid extremes; otherwise, by rubbing too hard to remove the rust, he may break the vessel. He is to distrust his own frailty and remember *not to crush the bruised reed* (Isa 42:3). By this we do not mean that he should allow faults to flourish, but rather, as we have already said, he should prune them away with prudence and love as he sees best for each individual." See Gomez, 241.

F. The Rigorism of RB

Although Benedict is usually characterized as a model of balance and moderation, it would not be accurate to present him as totally devoid of rigorism. In fact, he seems to be almost obsessed with the question of punishment. This is apparent from the sheer volume of penalties found in the Rule. We have already commented on the great size of the Penal Code (twelve chapters), but it must be added that no less than twenty-seven other chapters end with threats of punishment. The Master has a bad reputation as a rigorist (see Kardong, 25.93-104), but even he does not seem to be as interested as Benedict in penalties. Furthermore, Benedict frequently speaks of sin and guilt. See Veronesi, 164.45-49.

Nor can we say that Benedict's *sole* purpose in punishment is therapeutic. No doubt that is his primary goal, but he is not above invoking lower motives for his penal measures. He frequently speaks of *satisfactio,* which has more to do with objective reparation than with personal conversion. Although he is convinced that true conversion is a matter of the heart, he will play on fear when that is all that is effective (see notes on 2.27-28). See Veronesi, 164.59.

Moreover, there may also be a nagging question about the whole phenomenon of Christian excommunication. Is it really Christ-like? Did Jesus ever reject anyone out of hand? He seems to have reached out to the type of people that Christian communities have tended to expel. And yet, if we come to a point where we feel we cannot expel members who are truly harmful to the body of the community, we may find ourselves in the same situation as did the medieval monks who had to build prison cells for their own members. See Kardong, 20.40-57.

G. Does Benedict Really Have a System of Punishments?

Throughout this Overview, we have used words like "code" and "system" to characterize Benedict's penal material. However, there is real question whether these terms are strictly accurate to describe this material. Recent commentators such as Vogüé, 5.781-785, and Veronesi, 161.37-50, have pointed out numerous anomalies in the material indicating that what we have here is not nearly as systematic as it may at first appear.

First, the disparate penalties that appear throughout the Rule are quite vague. Unlike the Master, Benedict rarely proposes a specific penalty for a specific action. He often merely remarks that a violation makes the culprit subject to the "discipline of the Rule" *(disciplina regularis).* That seems to refer to the penal chapters, but we are still left to wonder whether the offense is light or grave, and so on.

Secondly, within the penal section, even though there is the clear distinction between grave and trivial, hardly any concrete faults are mentioned. What seems to be at issue in every case, though, is contumacy (see note 23.1). Thus, the penalties are aimed at attitudes rather than at objective violations. This is very much in line with Benedict's concern to convert the heart of the individual.

Third, there seem to be two passages that call into question any attempt to codify Benedict's penal legislation. The first one is the famous section on the *senpectae* (RB 27.1-5). Besides being, as we have already remarked, a remarkable suggestion that the abbot himself back off from a given case, it can also be seen as a sort of subversion of the basic principle of excommunication. That is, immediately after setting down a very stiff prohibition against fraternization with the excommunicated, Benedict urges the abbot to send in *senpectae* "on the sly" *(quasi secrete)* to do just that! Of course, the abbot controls the process, but it does seem that he is thereby jeopardizing the whole system.

Another text that leans in the same direction is 28.4, on prayer to be offered for the recidivist. Certainly, one must try to explain the late appearance of prayer in that therapeutic inventory of steps to be taken before expulsion. As we pointed out in note 28.4, one can hardly take this literally, for prayer must be applied all along the way. But prayer as the penultimate step in the process seems to disrupt the teleology of the system, which is clearly heading toward expulsion. Benedict may be subtly warning us not to let any system guarantee such a dire outcome.

And so we may conclude that if there is any "system" at all in the penal material, if there is a "penal code," it probably comes down to the abbot himself. In many places, Benedict insists that the abbot is completely in charge of the process (see notes 25.5; 24.2; 26T,1; 27.6), which ultimately depends on the wisdom of a compassionate but firm spiritual father who cares only for the healing and ultimate salvation of his brothers. Unlike civil society, which cannot rely on such spiritual ideals but needs a clear rule of law, the Benedictine monastic community is founded on the presence of the Holy Spirit in its leader. This Spirit blows where she wills, and she may suggest surprising and unorthodox ways to care for the brothers through discipline. See *Index:* Discernment.

XXXI: DE CELLARARIO MONASTERII, QUALIS SIT

[1]Cellararius monasterii eligatur de congregatione, sapiens, maturis moribus, sobrius, non multum edax, non elatus, non turbulentus, non

iniuriosus, non tardus, non prodigus, [2]sed timens Deum; qui omni congregationi sit sicut pater. [3]Curam gerat de omnibus; [4]sine iussione abbatis nihil faciat. [5]Quae iubentur custodiat; [6]fratres non contristet. [7]Si quis frater ab eo forte aliqua irrationabiliter postulat, non spernendo eum contristet, sed rationabiliter cum humilitate male petenti deneget. [8]Animam suam custodiat, memor semper illud apostolicum quia *qui bene ministraverit gradum bonum sibi acquirit.* [9]Infirmorum, infantum, hospitum pauperumque cum omni sollicitudine curam gerat, sciens sine dubio quia pro his omnibus in die iudicii rationem redditurus est. [10]Omnia vasa monasterii cunctamque substantiam ac si altaris vasa sacrata conspiciat. [11]Nihil ducat neglegendum. [12]Neque avaritiae studeat, neque prodigus sit et stirpator substantiae monasterii, sed omnia mensurate faciat et secundum iussionem abbatis.

[13]Humilitatem ante omnia habeat, et cui substantia non est quod tribuatur, sermo responsionis porrigatur bonus, [14]ut scriptum est: *Sermo* bonus *super datum optimum.* [15]Omnia quae ei iniunxerit abbas, ipsa habeat sub cura sua; a quibus eum prohibuerit, non praesumat. [16]Fratribus constitutam annonam sine aliquo typho vel mora offerat, ut non scandalizentur, memor divini eloquii quid mereatur *qui scandalizaverit unum de pusillis.*

[17]Si congregatio maior fuerit, solacia ei dentur, a quibus adiutus et ipse aequo animo impleat officium sibi commissum. [18]Horis competentibus dentur quae danda sunt et petantur quae petenda sunt, [19]ut nemo perturbetur neque contristetur in domo Dei.

RB 31: THE QUALITIES OF THE CELLARER

1. The cellarer of the monastery should be chosen from the community. He should be a wise person, of mature character and well disciplined. He should not be gluttonous, arrogant, violent, unfair, stingy or wasteful. 2. Rather, he should be one who fears God and is like the father to the whole community.

3. He should take care of everyone. 4. Let him do nothing without the abbot's order, 5. but carry out all that has been commanded. 6. He should not put down the brothers. 7. If some brother should demand something from him in an unreasonable way, he should not crush him with a rebuke, but deny the obnoxious petitioner in a reasonable and humble manner. 8. Let him keep guard over his own soul, remembering always that saying of the Apostle: *Whoever serves well gains a good reward.* 9. He should lavish great care on the sick, the children, the guests and the poor, knowing without any doubt that he will have to give an account for all these on judgment day. 10. He should consider

the pots of the monastery and all its goods as if they were the holy bowls of the altar. 11. He must not hold anything as negligible. 12. Let him not be controlled by avarice, nor should he waste or dissipate the goods of the monastery. But he should take a balanced approach to everything and follow the abbot's orders.

13. Above all else he should have humility, and when he has no material goods to give someone who asks, he should at least return a friendly word. 14. For it is written: A good *word is better than the best gift.* 15. Let him care well for all that the abbot commits to him, but let him not presume to meddle with what he withholds from him. 16. He should give the brothers their established allotment of food without arrogance or delay so as not to scandalize them. He should remember the Lord's saying about the fate of anyone *who should scandalize one of these little ones.*

17. If the community is rather large, let him be given helpers to aid him so he can peacefully perform the duties entrusted to him. 18. He should give what needs to be given and they should make their requests at the proper times. 19. Thus no one will be upset or vexed in the house of God.

RB 31 Notes

T

This chapter has some roots in RM 16, on the cellarer, but its fundamental spirit is different. Benedict's cellarer has far more responsibility and discretion than that official in RM. He is in fact one of the most important monastic officials and may have been the earliest lieutenant of the abbot in the evolution of Benedict's institution (Borias, 18.226-227). The biblical model for this chapter is 1 Timothy 3, which describes the qualities of a good deacon. Benedict's use of this model shows that social and spiritual responsibilities were not cleanly divided in the early Church and monastery. Compared to RM 16, RB 31 is much less detailed, but concentrates more on meaning (Holzherr, 190). On the other hand, the Master provides a rich biblical foundation for the cellarer, pointing him to the model of the heavenly Father, who lavishly provides for all of creation so that none need worry for the morrow (RM 16.12-15; Matt 6:25, 32–33). Unfortunately, Benedict has dropped this theme, which would have enhanced his chapter considerably.

The role of cellarer has deep roots in the monastic tradition: Pachomius, *pr.* 13; Basil, *reg.* 111–114; 185–186; Augustine, *reg. serv.* 5.9; *reg. iv patr.* 3.22-26; Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 30,42.

1.

chosen (elegatur) presumably by the abbot as are the deans (21.1) and

priests (62.1). If there was a wider election, it was purely consultative (Lentini, 297). Since the role of cellarer is not simply administrative ("like the father," 31.2), the cellarer should not be an outsider, but one of the brothers. Although a community nowadays may require outside assistance to manage a complex economy, the brothers should not have to depend on outsiders for their personal needs. H. Feiss points to the troubles caused by medieval *vogtei* or late *commendam* abbots.

well disciplined; not gluttonous (sobrius, non multum edax), terms copied from RM 16.62-63. Because the Master has a strong suspicion that the cellarer will indulge himself, most of RM 16 is admonitory, while RB 31 is essentially peaceful in tone. Nevertheless, Benedict also copies the triad: *sobrius, non multum edax, non elatum (superbum)* in 4.34-36 (RM 3.39-41). The "cellar" was primarily the larder in ancient parlance, so the cellarer would have opportunities to self-indulgence.

nonviolent (non turbulentus). This term is also used for the abbot in 64.16, which could be seen as inconsequential were it not for other statements in RB 31 that suggest that the cellarer possessed a good deal of delegated authority, both material and spiritual. Since *non turbulentus* is the first attribute listed in 64.16 for the abbot, it could be the key item, the remaining adjectives being commentary (Vogüé, 3.326). The biblical allusion to Isaiah 42:4 is very significant, for it makes the Suffering Servant the model for monastic leadership. See *Index:* Peace. The ultimate reference is to Christ, who willingly bore the taunts of human beings in order to save them. It is worth noting that Isaiah 42:4 reads: *non tristes et turbulentus,* both qualities excluded by RB 31. An example of how the cellarer's patience can be tried is seen in 31.7. Other terms connecting the cellarer to the abbot are: *timentibus eum* (2.36); *sapientia* (64.2); *sobrius* (65.9).

not stingy (non tardus). Lentini, 297, thinks that when it is paired with *prodigus* (wasteful), *tardus* means "slow to give what is needed." That is probably true, since mere lack of alacrity cannot be seen as a fault on the same level as the other ones listed here. In 64.21, the abbot is seen as a good steward who gives the brothers grain at the proper time, namely, when they need it. Another possible translation is "fussy" (Salzburg).

unfair (iniuriosus). As in 7.35 (see note), I have connected this word to *jus* (right) rather than to a general offense. Since he is dealing with a variety of characters, favoritism or cronyism is a serious fault in a cellarer.

2.
fears God (timens Deum). It is typical of Benedict to demand this

virtue of monastic officials in charge of seemingly mundane departments, e.g., nurses (36.7); guestmasters (53.21); porters (56.4). This insistence is based on two theological principles which lie at the very heart of the Rule: (1) God is omnipotent and omniscient (7.10-13); (2) God/Christ is encountered in all persons, especially the least prepossessing. Kardong, 4.84-86; 12.37-43; see *Index:* Fear.

like the father (sicut pater). Since he possesses qualities of the abbot (31.1), the cellarer seems to be a sort of surrogate abbot figure for Benedict (Borias, 1.412; Overview, B.1); fatherhood is the central quality of Benedict's abbot (note 2.1; see *Index:* Father). Therefore to posit it of the cellarer indicates that Benedict is not adverse to distributing spiritual authority throughout the community (see 21.3; 46.6).

3.

care of everyone (curam de omnibus). Borias, 1.415-417, thinks the proper translation of *omnibus* should be "everyone," not "everything" as most English commentators have it. But he admits that *omnibus* is ambiguous, referring to either or both persons or things. It is taken for granted that the cellarer will take good care of the material possessions of the monastery. What is surprising is the stress placed on the proper treatment of people as well. Basing his interpretation on the preceding verse ("like the father"), and a parallel usage in 21.2, Lentini, 298–299, also prefers "everyone," stressing the need for the cellarer to watch out for the welfare of all without exception. See *Index:* Care.

4.

without the abbot's order (sine jussionis abbatis). After the sweeping commission of v. 3, Benedict quickly hedges the power of the cellarer with an equally profound restriction: nothing but what the abbot orders and everything that he orders.

5.

carry out all (custodire). The root meaning of *custodire* (= to guard) seems to point this sentence toward the idea that *all* orders will be carried out and none conveniently "lost" or forgotten.

6.

not put down (non contristet). Sadness is an important consideration in this chapter, appearing three times (31.6,7,19). Although the cellarer may have to deny a request, there is no reason to do so in a disdainful or crushing way. M. Larmann, 159–174, points out that Benedict always considers sadness an unfortunate thing and something produced by insensitive social relations in the community. See *Index:* Sadness.

Basil, *reg.* 8, notes that there is a sadness that leads to conversion, but also a sadness that induces depression and bad morale. Benedict calls salutary sadness *compunctio* (20.3; 49.4). Evagrius (*prak.* 10.19) shows that we bring some sadness on ourselves by clinging to old hurts or by fostering unreasonable ambitions which lead to aggressivity (see RB 31.7). Cassian (*inst.* 9.1,4) warns that sadness is not cured by withdrawal but by maintaining charitable contacts with the community. Athanasius (*vit. Ant.* 55) extols Antony's charisma in the following terms: "Christ has sent Egypt a good physician. Upon meeting Antony, whose sadness was not turned to joy?" And Benedict himself knew how to banish sadness: When the poor Goth lost the sickle blade in the lake, he restored both it and the crestfallen brother: "Go to work and be not sad!" (Gregory, *dial.* 2.8). See *Index:* Sadness.

7.

unreasonable way (inrationabiliter). The logic of this verse is clearly that the cellarer should meet unreason with reason rather than vituperation. If the cellarer would be tempted to lash back at the importunate demand, then it is probably not just unreasonable but "awkward" *(male petenti).* In any case, this transaction should not be allowed to degenerate into a row. See Kardong, 5.120; see *Index:* Reason.

8.

keep guard (custodiat) may be a play on the idea that the cellarer is to take good care of the chattels of the community (see v. 5): therefore he should all the more care for his own soul. Whatever the precise train of the logic at this point, it is certain that Benedict is convinced that the administration of the goods of the monastery is not merely an economic problem but a spiritual one.

good reward (gradum bonum), literally a "good place." In 1 Timothy 3:13, the saying is addressed to deacons. Most likely they are promised a higher rank in heaven, not in the hierarchy of the Church. Lentini, 300, thinks that Benedict wishes to reassure the cellarer that although his work is mundane, it is not thereby devoid of spiritual significance. In fact, deacons played a very prominent role in the early Church, and Benedict may have modeled his cellarer on that group. At the time of Gregory the Great, the Roman deacons were still equal in power to the presbyterate. His *reg. iv patr.* 3.26-27 quotes the same text of 1 Timothy that is used for the cellarer. See *Index:* Merit.

remembering (memor) is often a significant idea for Benedict, and he usually uses the term to refer to an awareness of God (notes 7.10; 19.3) or one's role in the divine scheme (2.6). This instance pertains to the second category.

serves (ministraverit). The etymology of the term shows that it refers to a subordinate role *(minus).* According to OLD, a *minister* was a servant at ancient religious rites. The cellarer's function is not explicitly liturgical, but Benedict will make that connection in 31.10, where he speaks of the sacred vessels of the altar.

9.

lavish great care (cum omni sollicitudine curam gerat). Along with *cura, sollicitudo* is a frequent expression in RB, and it always has to do with proper concern for persons. Although other monastic officials may have direct care for the sick, guests, etc., the cellarer must at least be responsible for the physical needs of all these helpless or dependent wards of the monastery. See *Index:* Care.

judgment day (die judicii). Except for the abbot, the cellarer is the only official in RB to be warned of the judgment. Even the prior, over whom Benedict frets greatly, is not so warned. This shows once more that RB 31 is really a sort of modified abbatial directory. Perhaps the judgment scene of Matthew 25 is in the back of Benedict's mind here, and he quotes it explicitly at the heads of chapters 36 and 53.

10.

consider (conspiciat). The primary meaning is to "look sharply" or even "see through" *(cum + spicere)* (OLD). Even though the extended sense is probably meant here, the cellarer must have an acute vision of things to see their deeper significance. With both *conspicere*, and *ducat* in 31.11, the inner attitude of the cellarer is emphasized more than his conduct. This is much like RB 33, on avarice, where attitudes are again the chief concern. Is it coincidental that avarice is the subject of 31.12? See Kardong, 21.187-190.

pots . . . bowls (vasa . . . vasa). This striking image is drawn from Zechariah 14:20, an apocalyptic passage that describes the Lord's final intervention on behalf of Jerusalem. The point is not, of course, that the temple will be debased but that everything will be as holy as the temple furnishings. Whether or not Benedict is aware of it, he is in effect describing the monastery as a locus of realized eschatology. See notes 4.77; 5.7. The language of 31.19 *(in domo Dei)* seconds this viewpoint: the monastery is the very house of God. *Vasa altaris* is not original with Benedict: see Basil, *reg.* 103–104; Cassian, *inst.* 4.19-20; *reg. iv patr.* 3.28-29.

12.

controlled (studeat), literally, "pursue," but since one cannot exactly

pursue a vice but only keep it under more or less control, the meaning here must be to not give oneself over to greed. See note 31.10.

a balanced approach (mensurate) refers to the two extremes from the first part of the verse: avarice and prodigality. Benedict is famous for his sense of measure. In RB 48.9 the following maxim seems to be the central structural element: "All things are to be done with moderation on account of the fainthearted." See Kardong, 25.43.46; see *Index:* Measure.

the abbot's orders (secundum jussionem abbatis) virtually repeats 31.4. Apparently the broad faculties that Benedict has given the cellarer make him careful to erect tight restrictions. Borias, 10.282-285, considers this verse an inclusion with 31.1 (*prodigus* is repeated). Many ideas within vv. 1-12 are repeated and even form a rough chiasmus. In his opinion, this is the original material, with 31.13-19 forming a later addition. See Overview, A, for a fuller discussion of his views.

13.

The thought in this verse is much like 31.7, and both of them may derive from Augustine, *in Ps.* 103,I.19: "If you cannot give someone what he asks, do not spurn him. If you can give it, give it. If not, at least be kind."

humility (humilitatem) here receives an interesting explication. The cellarer is not told to abjectly apologize or make excuses. To become defensive would be even worse. What is needed is a kind and cheerful admission that the request cannot be satisfied, and perhaps an explanation why this is so. This is one of those passages that reveal that Benedict knew well the little things that make community life possible and bearable. No matter how poor or affluent a monastery is, if there is widespread gentleness and kindness, it is a rich community. See *Index:* Humility.

The entire passage from "and when . . . " to "friendly word" has two balanced members with an equal number of syllables and a nearly symmetrical accent pattern. It appears to be a careful composition (Lentini, 302), which would argue against it being a mere appendage (see note 31.12).

15.

Although this verse may appear at first glance to be a mere repetition of vv. 3-4, it is in fact somewhat different. Here the point is that the cellarer may not assume that every aspect of the material realm of the monastery is ipso facto under his control. That may be a good business principle, but the unifying element of the monastery is the abbot. See Lentini, 303. Historically speaking, the centralized control of the economy by a single cellarer usually made for monastic prosperity.

16.

arrogance (tyfo) is a rare word, in fact a mere transliteration of the Greek *typhos* (smoke). The meaning here seems to be "bluster," although Schmitz, 83, has *fievre,* (haste). Although that balances with "delay," it is hard to see why the community should be upset at receiving their rations too quickly.

scandalize (scandalizentur). The biblical meaning, as in Matthew 18:6, quoted later in the verse, is general: to place a stumbling block that causes another to fall into sin. The sin to be avoided here is irritation, but it was thought better to translate the verb literally in both cases so as to reproduce Benedict's biblical reasoning. Since the monks are strictly dependent for their physical existence on these rations, the term "little ones" is fitting. It is cruel and perverse to make them suffer any humiliation in the process.

allotment of food (annonam). The Rule lays down general norms for diet (35.12), which the abbot can modify to the circumstances. The cellarer is merely the distributor of the rations, not the judge of need.

17.

peacefully (aequo animo). While inner tranquillity is not as high a value for Benedict as it is for some monastic writers such as Cassian (see *conf.* 16) who are more heavily influenced by Stoicism, it is still important for Benedict. See, for example, RB 71.6-9, where the tranquillity of the senior monk is placed above all else (Kardong, 24.104). The cellarer has heavy responsibilities, but he also has a right to a reasonably peaceful monastic existence. The monastery is not simply a work camp, but a place for the spiritual quest and all that it demands in terms of leisure and quiet. See *Index:* Peace.

helpers (solacia) as in 53.18 and 20, where the guestmaster is given the requisite assistance. The point is the same: a monastic official cannot be expected to carry out his assigned work without the necessary means. See *Index:* Help.

proper times (horis competentibus). Benedict does not presume to set these times. That must be done locally by authority and custom. These are not exactly "office hours" for the cellarer, since some urgent personal needs cannot wait. Yet neither is the cellarer "on duty" at all times. Since this final section (17-19) seems to be an addendum for the purpose of protecting the cellarer, probably the verse should be read from that slant.

19.

upset or vexed (perturbentur neque contristetur). This fine ending

should not be misunderstood, for as long as we are all sinners, no one can avoid all disturbances. What is possible is to avoid giving others undue cause for grief through thoughtlessness, lack of discipline and the like. Benedict's "house of God" *(domo Dei)* is a place where it is "easy to be good" (Peter Maurin) because people treat one another with sensitivity and decency. This applies to everyone: officials and subjects. See *Index:* House of God, Sadden.

XXXII: DE FERRAMENTIS VEL REBUS MONASTERII

[1]Substantia monasterii in ferramentis vel vestibus seu quibuslibet rebus praevideat abbas fratres de quorum vita et moribus securus sit, [2]et eis singula, ut utile iudicaverit, consignet custodienda atque recolligenda. [3]Ex quibus abbas brevem teneat, ut dum sibi in ipsa assignata fratres vicissim succedunt, sciat quid dat aut quid recipit.

[4]Si quis autem sordide aut neglegenter res monasterii tractaverit, corripiatur; [5]si non emendaverit, disciplinae regulari subiaceat.

RB 32: THE TOOLS AND GOODS OF THE MONASTERY

1. Regarding the goods of the monastery, whether it be tools or clothing or anything else, the abbot should choose brothers of reliable life and habits, 2. and he will, as he sees fit, entrust them these objects to be cared for and collected. 3. The abbot will keep a list of these things, so that when the brothers succeed each other in their assignments, he will know what he gives out and what he receives back. 4. If anyone neglects the goods of the monastery or fails to keep them clean, he shall be reprimanded; 5. if he does not improve, he is to undergo the discipline of the Rule.

RB 32 Notes

T

tools (ferramentis), literally, "iron tools" of the type used in the garden and kitchen. In the sixth century, such tools were expensive and relatively scarce, hence the concern for their care and inventory. The model for this chapter is RM 17, which treats the subject at much greater length. The Master limits the supervision to one brother; perhaps Benedict uses the plural because he has a larger monastery. Or perhaps this material witnesses to a period before the institution of the office of cellarer, when the abbot was still able to keep track of every-

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thing himself (Borias, 18.226-227). At the end of his "Spiritual Art" (RM 3), the Master speaks of the various practices as "tools," and he uses the same word *ferramenta* as is used here. Perhaps the concrete practice of RM 17 influenced the thought and vocabulary of RM 3. Benedict, however, uses the more abstract word *instrumenta* in RB 4.75. See Kardong, 7.240-243.

1.

goods of the monastery (substantia monasterii). Borias, 10.282-285, believes that RB 32 followed originally on RB 31.12. One reason he thinks so is that the same term, *monasterii . . . substantiam,* appears in 31.10, whereas *substantia* is used slightly differently in 31.13. He also thinks 31.13-19 is a later addition. *Substantia* has no grammatical function in the sentence as it now stands. Lentini, 307, and Manning, 95, see RB 32 as an extension of 31.17-19: the cellarer should be given needed helpers. If one attaches it to 31.12, it seems more aimed at the care of things in themselves (see Overview, C).

reliable life and habits (de . . . vita et moribus securus) is much like 31.1, *maturis moribus,* except that here there is also an accent on the abbot, who should be confident *(securus)* in these officials.

2.

cared for and collected (custodienda atque recollegenda). Since v. 1 requires special virtues in these brothers, it is clear they are officials and not mere artisans. *Custodire* here cannot mean "to guard," for the tools and clothes must be distributed. They are to be "collected" after use. It is an important aspect of common life that each member *not* have a complete set of personal "tools" but share them with the rest.

3.

assignments (adsignata) is probably a reference to the office of toolmaster, clothier and so on, rather than the work assignments, as Steidle, 5.121, seems to suggest with *Arbeitsplätzen*. Still, one wonders why such officials would be changing places often, as is implied in this verse. In *pr.* 66, Pachomius arranges a weekly review of all tools, but in his system there is a complete rotation of jobs each week by deaneries. Except for the kitchen, Benedict seems to keep his monks in their assignments for much longer periods (see 53.17, where guesthouse domestics are assigned by the year). See Lentini, 307.

list (brevem). Throughout Benedictine history, the cellarer has generally kept this kind of inventory, so it is surprising that that official is never mentioned in this chapter (see note 32T). The insight that someone must be monitor of the common property is extremely apropos.

"That which belongs to everyone" may also seem to belong to no one and hence suffer neglect. For proof of this, observe the behavior of workers under communism. Multiple users of a car or another "tool" usually guarantees poor maintenance unless someone keeps a constant eye on it. Nonetheless, each person can at least be careful not to leave the things used in worse condition than when they were obtained for use. "In all things which passing necessity uses, let permanent love prevail" (Augustine, *reg. serv.* 5.2).

4.

sordide . . . tractaverit (fails to clean them), literally, "treats them dirtily." It is not a fault to soil the tools, for that is inevitable in serious work. Rather, the fault lies in leaving them unclean, since iron rusts when left soiled (RM 17.5). Besides the economic loss incurred in this kind of slovenly behavior, Benedict takes a religious view of the topic (31.10) by equating tools *(vasa)* with liturgical utensils *(sacrata).* In modern times, it is also recognized that the earth's resources are not unlimited and need to be carefully marshaled if future generations are not to live an impoverished existence.

RB 31–32 Overview

Although it is not particularly lengthy, RB 31 is an important chapter in Benedict's scheme of things. Some important monastic officials such as the guestmaster and the novice master are merely discussed in connection with their departments. But since the whole monastery is the department of the cellarer, this official receives a separate chapter. Some officials in the Rule have their own chapter, but are treated quite negatively: thus the prior (RB 65). The cellarer, however, is presented very positively, leading A. Borias, 18.226-227, to speculate that this official and this chapter came before the traumatic event that produced RB 65 and the last verses of RB 21 (the deans). Perhaps this was the only lieutenant Benedict had in the first years of his community.

A. Benedict's Use of RM 16

The office of cellarer is not original with Benedict. Indeed, it was traditional in cenobitism since the time of Pachomius (see note 31T). In the Rule of the Master, chapter 16 is devoted to this official (see Vogüé, 3.306-326). It is a typically huge treatise, with vv. 1-31 presenting an elaborate biblical basis for the work of the cellarer: He is to embody the loving care the Lord has for all of creation. Like the lilies of the field, the monks should be able to lead a life free of care.

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Benedict has omitted this whole section, not necessarily to his advantage. After all, Matthew's ethic of utter dependence on God in the Sermon on the Mount would have provided a fine biblical foundation for RB 31. As it is, Benedict's chapter is somewhat thin in its biblical underpinning.

The Master spends the rest of RM 16 giving concrete details of the cellarer's work. Without discussing these particulars, it is still necessary to note that it is painfully clear that the Master does not put much importance on this official. For him, the cellarer is a mere functionary, strictly limited to the distribution of material goods. Far from having any discretionary or spiritual authority, he is not even trusted. Indeed, the Master rather expects that the cellarer will indulge himself on the sly like a naughty schoolboy. In other words, he treats the cellarer without much respect, as he does everyone else but the abbot.

For his part, Benedict has a completely different attitude toward the cellarer. In general, we can say that Benedict's cellarer is a highly valued collaborator and colleague with the abbot. He is given a great deal of responsibility and authority, not only for things but for persons. To effect such a sharp change of approach, Benedict had to extensively rework RM 16. As often happens with heavy editorial revision, the result ends in some literary shortcomings. RB 31 tends to be somewhat repetitious and even disorganized. Borias, 10.282-285, claims that 31.1 and 12 form an inclusion and that 1-12 is actually written in chiastic form. In his opinion, 13-19 were added at a later time, which is shown by the way some of the vocabulary has shifted meaning from its use in 1-12. In response, I would say that the "added" material is no less carefully written or coherent than the "main body" (1-12).

B. The Cellarer: A Notable Creation of Benedict

1. Like the Father to the Community

Nevertheless, Borias, 1.412, is undoubtedly right when he emphasizes the cellarer as a key collaborator of the abbot. He puts great weight on 31.2, which he translates "like *the* father," not like "a father." As he notes, the abbot is the only "father" in Benedict's Rule (33.5), so the cellarer cannot be *another* father to the monks. Instead, he is a surrogate for the abbot.

In Benedict's view of monasticism, the abbot is in full charge of all aspects of life in the community, including the material sphere. Therefore, it is not a question of separating the two spheres of the spiritual and the material, as sometimes happens in Eastern monasticism with the hegumen and the staretz. Still, practically speaking the abbot cannot personally superintend every element of the material sphere,

especially if the community is at all large. Thus the physical care of the community is largely delegated to the cellarer (but see note 31.15 on the limits of this delegation). We noted in the introduction that this chapter lacks the tension that mars some other chapters of RB devoted to subordinate officials. Nevertheless, Benedict makes it abundantly clear that the cellarer has absolutely no independent power and remains totally under the abbot's supervision (31.4,5,12,15).

Even though the cellarer is charged with care of the material needs of the brothers, Benedict puts much less emphasis on the objective element of supply and demand than on the manner in which the cellarer treats the brothers. The very first verse (31.1) begins with a list of the qualities requisite in this official, and when we examine them closely, we see that almost all of them concern personal relations.

Moreover, this particular list looks very much like the list given for the abbot in 64.16. Vogüé, 3.326, points out that the heart of that list may be the first virtue: "Not excitable" *(non turbulentus),* the rest being commentary on this central biblical value. It is in fact based on the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 42:4, who is in turn a model for Jesus, who died so that others might live (and not vice versa).

Non violentus is not the first item in the list for the cellarer, but the rest of the chapter seems to indicate that it is again the heart of the treatise. In 31.7, this is spelled out in no uncertain terms: What is the cellarer to do if he is "attacked" by an overwrought *(inrationabiliter)* monk? The temptation is to return evil for evil, but that is what he must not do. Instead, he must not treat the monk arrogantly (*spernendo,* 31.7; *tyfo,* 31.16), nor should he cause distress (*contristari,* 31.6,7,19) whenever he can avoid it.

2. Caring and Being Cared for

By now it is apparent that RB 31 is mostly concerned with mutual relations in the community. This comes through somewhat indirectly in the vocabulary Benedict employs. Thus he always uses the term *frater* (brother) instead of monk; *frater* is a relational term, while "monk" is more generic. He makes a rather clear distinction between the material and the personal when he uses *monasterium* (31.1,10,12) for the physical entity, but *congregatio* (31.1,2,17) for persons-in-community. Finally, he uses the term *domus Dei* (house of God) in a way that makes it clear that he is referring to the "Church as people": "Thus no one will be upset or saddened in the house of God" (31.19).

A *crux interpretationis* for RB 31 lies in the third verse, where the reader must make a choice of "everything" or "everyone." In itself, *omnibus* can mean either, but from the rest of the chapter it seems that Benedict is mostly concerned about the way the cellarer treats the

people of the community. And of those persons, the ones he should watch over most carefully are those in the most need: the sick, the children, the guests and the poor (31.9). But as a matter of fact, *all* cenobites (including the abbot) depend completely on the monastery for their daily bread, so the cellarer must be extremely careful not to use his power over them in a destructive way. J. Sutera, 348–351, reminds us that the obverse side of the monastic pursuit of personal dispossession is the care that each one deserves from the abbot (RB 55.18-22). Thus the cellarer is very much involved in helping the community remain faithful to its dependency on the Lord for all things.

But the cellarer not only must care for others; he must also take care of himself. Although 31.8 "he must keep guard over his own soul" could be interpreted as a warning to do his duty to others, it can also be seen as an admonition not to spend himself entirely on his duties to others and to the goods of the community. He should also remember that his purpose as a monk is to live a healthy and holy life.

As much as Benedict enjoins the cellarer to take good care of others, he remains aware that there is a reciprocal duty on the part of those receiving his attention to watch out for his welfare. In 31.17, the abbot is instructed to give him sufficient help in his work (see also 53.18 on the guesthouse). The members of the community are warned not to bother him at all hours for the things they need, but keep to the appointed times (31.18). All in all, RB 31 presents an edifying picture of a community in which all the members are considerate and careful of the welfare of the others.

C. The Care of Things

So far we have emphasized the cellarer's responsibility for the persons of the monastery. He is to carry out this charge largely through the way he dispenses the things people find necessary to their livelihood. But what about the things as such; is there concern that they be properly appreciated and handled? In this age of ecological awareness, this is a question that is asked with more than academic interest.

There is, of course, the justly famous passage in 31.10-11: "He should consider the pots of the monastery and all its goods as if they were the holy bowls of the altar. He must not hold anything as negligible." The theology here is clear and powerful: Benedict will tolerate no dualism between the sacred and the profane. All things are holy since they came from the hand of God, who looked on them and said: "It is good" (Gen 1:4ff.).

This is, of course, a very practical injunction, since there is a tendency in a commune where there is no private property to neglect

things. But rather than point out the merely mundane problem with that philosophy, Benedict insists on a kind of universal mysticism of things and nature that sees in them the very hand of the Creator. Given the extreme reverence for the sacred vessels that has always characterized Catholicism, this claim for the holiness of even the humblest cooking pot is not to be dismissed as a purple passage.

If this single verse is held to be too slight a foundation on which to ground a theology of good stewardship, RB 32 provides some corroboration. In that little chapter, the abbot himself is seen dispensing tools and other goods to the community. Not only are the brothers strictly enjoined to take good care of what they use; the abbot is to keep a list of what is given out and taken in, checking on the condition of all these items.

Sutera, 352–354, has pointed out that this is in fact the second time that Benedict has talked about the dispensation and use of tools. In RB 4.75-78 (see *Index:* Tools), the various elements of the spiritual art that make up that long list are compared to tools to be returned on Judgment Day. It is a curious fact that Benedict does not carry the image to its logical conclusion by speaking of the products of the tools. Rather, he focuses on the tools themselves as if these were of the greatest interest to him.

In RB 32, of course, the tools are no longer a metaphor for the spiritual life. Now it is a question of the concrete implements themselves, and it seems like their very use is an aspect of the spiritual life. We are now in an atmosphere like that prevailing among serious craftsmen, for whom the abuse or misuse of a fine tool or piece of wood is a kind of sacrilege. It is equivalent to desecration of a precious liturgical vessel.

According to Borias, 10.284-285, it is not at all fanciful to connect the remarks in RB 32 with 31.10-11, since he suspects that this material once followed immediately upon 31.12. He notes that while certain vocabulary (e.g., *substantia*) is used slightly differently between 31.1-12 and 13-19, RB 32 returns to the patterns in the first section. Whether this theory is correct or not, it is obvious that RB 32 continues the thought of 31.10-11: things are not "merely things" but part of God's creation to be reverenced and carefully maintained. See Kardong, 31.170.

XXXIII: SI QUID DEBEANT MONACHI PROPRIUM HABERE

[1]Praecipue hoc vitium radicitus amputandum est de monasterio, [2]ne quis praesumat aliquid dare aut accipere sine iussione abbatis, [3]neque

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aliquid habere proprium, nullam omnino rem, neque codicem, neque tabulas, neque graphium, sed nihil omnino, [4]quippe quibus nec corpora sua nec voluntates licet habere in propria voluntate; [5]omnia vero necessaria a patre sperare monasterii, nec quicquam liceat habere quod abbas non dederit aut permiserit. [6]*Omniaque* omnium *sint communia,* ut scriptum est, *ne quisquam suum aliquid dicat* vel *praesumat.*

[7]Quod si quisquam huic nequissimo vitio deprehensus fuerit delectari, admoneatur semel et iterum; [8]si non emendaverit, correptioni subiaceat.

RB 33: WHETHER THE MONKS SHOULD CONSIDER ANYTHING THEIR OWN

1. This vice in particular must be torn up by the roots: 2. that anyone should presume to give or receive anything without the abbot's permission, 3. or consider anything personal property, absolutely nothing: no book, no writing tablets, no stylus—nothing whatsoever. 4. That is because they have neither their bodies nor their own wills at their own disposal. 5. Rather, they should ask for all they need from the father of the monastery. And it is not permissible to have anything that the abbot does not give or permit. 6. *Let all things be common to all,* as Scripture says, *so that no one may* presume *to call* anything his own. 7. But if anyone is caught indulging in this most detestable vice, let him be warned once and a second time. 8. If there is no improvement, he should be punished.

RB 33 Notes

T

consider (habere). The title is quoted almost verbatim from Basil, *reg.* 29T. Since *habere* means to "hold in the mind" (= consider) for Basil, I retain that meaning here as well, since that seems to best explain the content of this chapter. Even though Benedict has changed Basil's title to the plural, this chapter is essentially aimed at the individual; in fact, the corporate body of monks *do* consider their property "their own." See Kardong, 21.184-201.

1.

in particular (praecipue). Although personal dispossession is of special interest in a cenobitic monastery, it can hardly be placed at the top of the list of values. Christianity has always considered love the highest virtue, and its opposite the worst vice. Jesus seems to have required

some disciples to abandon all to follow him (Matt 19:21), but that never became a blanket requirement for all Christians. Benedict's language in this verse seems calculated to make a stunning impression (Lentini, 311), but more than that, he does tie personal poverty very closely to the total gift of self (31.4). As in Cassian, *inst.* 7.21,27, this verse inveighs against avarice, but Benedict goes on to speak of the necessity for the monk to eschew the claim to anything at all.

Holzherr, 197–200, sees three reasons in RB 33 for dispossession: (1) a remedy for the spirit of autonomy; (2) trust in the fatherly care of the abbot; (3) example of the primitive Church in Acts. In my opinion, the first reason is the heart of RB 33.

torn up by the roots (radicitus amputandum) is an inelegant translation meant to express a violent idea. Cassian, *inst.* 7.21, treats that vice like certain species of weeds that can regenerate themselves from the smallest part of a root not totally extirpated. On the other hand, since avarice is not, like lust or gluttony, related to actual bodily needs, it can be easily avoided. Yet once it gains a foothold it is insatiable (Kardong, 21.182-185). Since *inst.* 7.21 is again quoted in 33.7 *(nequissimo vitio),* I consider this inclusion the major influence on RB 33. When speaking again of private possessions for monks in RB 55.18, Benedict also uses the phrase *radicitus amputandum,* which shows that the idea was well fixed in his mind. See *Index:* Amputate.

2.

without the abbot's order (sine jussionem abbatis) is a carryover of vocabulary from RB 31.4,12. Moreover, the topic is still property, now seen from the standpoint of personal ascesis.

presume (praesumat) always has a pejorative meaning, but for Benedict it is particularly offensive since it usually involves usurpation of the abbot's role by an unauthorized monk. The cenobite can only receive from the abbot and community; and he has no right to reroute the goods. On no account may a monk, including the abbot, accumulate private reserves or distribute personal largesse.

3.

consider (habere). Just as in the title, the issue here is not whether one actually has the use of an item, but whether one thinks of it possessively. That is precisely the issue in Cassian, *inst.* 4.13, which is the source of this verse: not to say "my book, my table," and so on. The same point is made in Acts 4:32, which is cited in RB 33.6. Benedict does not deny that these items must be used—one cannot live without the use of many things. Moreover, some things will not be conveniently passed

from hand to hand. As Evagrius says, *de octo vit.* 1451: "The avaricious person is not necessarily the one who has riches, but the one who loves them and desires to acquire them."

book, writing tablets, stylus (codicem . . . tabulas . . . graphium) is the same list as in Cassian, *inst.* 4.13. The fact that all these items pertain to literacy or book production does not prove that these were principal concerns of Benedict, who is not to be confused with the bookish Cassiodorus. At RB 55.19, a similar list is given that mostly describes clothing but repeats *tabulas* and *graphium*. The point is the same: all necessities must be received, but not appropriated.

This verse is loaded with negatives: *neque, nullam, neque, neque, neque, nihil*. In fact, it emphasizes the negative side of the question: disappropriation of material goods. RB 34 will take up the positive element of distribution. See Manning, 3.96.

4.

That is because (quippe). *RB 1980* has "especially since," which suggests an *a fortiori* argument, but that is not strictly accurate. Still, that is the logic that Basil uses in *reg.* 29: "Since Christ gave his life for us, how can we consider our own that which is much less personal than our life?" Gribomont, 1.254-255, argues that this verse is the heart of RB 33, and that it represents a Basilian theology: Just as Christ gave his life for the community, and the monk gives his very self to Christ and the community, so should he symbolize and concretize this self-gift by dispossession. Basil, *reg.* 106, directly connects the *kenosis* (self-effacement) of Christ with monastic dispossession (Holzherr, 198). Böckmann, 6.362-363, sees v. 4 as the central member of an elaborate chiasm, but she does not read it in a communal light. Whether or not v. 4 really is the central core (Borias votes for v. 5a, see note), I think that this chapter is not based on communal theology; it is thoroughgoing Cassianic individual asceticism (see esp. note 33.6).

It is notable that no case is made here for the absolute value of poverty or frugality (though that is done in RB 34). The argument is instrumental: lack of possessions keeps us aware that we owe everything to God. Moreover, the chapter mostly addresses the individual, while the rest of the Rule presupposes that the monastic community as a body owns property. Of course, it is possible for corporate wealth to undermine personal frugality. See Lentini, 316–317.

at their own disposal (voluntate). On the basis of RB 58.25, Vogüé, 2.563, conjectures that *voluntate* is a scribal error for *potestate*. Since it is awkward to find *voluntas* twice in the same sentence, translators generally

end by reading the second instance as some form of power or self-will. Even Lentini, 313, who thinks Benedict wrote *propria voluntate* out of force of habit, as in Prol 3; 1.11; 3.8; 4.60, etc., still translates it *padrone* (proprietors). See *Index:* Will.

5.

the abbot does not give or permit (abbas non dederit aut permiserit). The notion of abbatial approval is repeated from v. 2, and also found in RB 31.4,5,12,15; 32.3. It is indeed a strong leitmotif running through chapters 31–33.

ask for (sperare), literally, "to hope for," but used to mean "ask" in such sixth-century texts as Eugippius, *vit. Sev.* 32.43 and *reg. Pl. et St.* 4.2-3; 31.5 (Vogüé, 2.563). To have to constantly ask for small needs is inconvenient, and current monastic practice shows it is easy enough to create a system where such asking is eliminated. But this may simply create a lifestyle where dependency is masked and the illusion of independence is fostered. There is no obvious main verb controlling *sperare,* but something like *debent* (they should) is to be understood (Lentini, 313).

the father of the monastery (patre . . . monasterii) is also seen in Pachomius, *pr.* 81, where it occurs in the same context. The reference is to the abbot, but that term was not yet used by Pachomius. The use of "father" in RB 33 serves to humanize and personalize a rather harsh chapter. See *Index:* Father.

all they need (necessaria). This idea will be developed in the next chapter. It implies, of course, that the abbot is duty bound to provide the monks with what they need. That side of the matter is clearly articulated in 55.20-22. If they do not get what they need, the monks will be tempted to provide for themselves, which always undermines cenobitic life.

Borias, 2.30-32, claims that 33.5a *(omnia . . . monasterii)* is the central verse of the chiastic structure of RB 33 (against Böckmann's claim that the center is v. 4). Actually, only vv. 1-2 and 6-7 form any kind of clear chiasm, the rest being considered "out of the order" by both scholars. It would be comforting to think that dependence on "the father of the monastery" is the nub of RB 33, but even that can be understood in a harsh way: Vogüé, 6.879-880, sees the chapter as centering the self-gift of the monk on the abbot. Surely that can only be a means of dedicating oneself to Christ (v. 4). Probably Benedict introduces the abbatial element to lend a cenobitic flavor to Cassian's theory of how to combat avarice.

Holzherr, 199, takes a more positive view of the matter, seeing this verse as primarily an expression of the biblical injunction that the Christian should be free from care (Matt 6:33). RM 82 spells this out directly in terms of dispossession, but Benedict does so only through the mediation of the abbot. Yet the abbot himself must rely on God's providence in the material order (RB 2.33-36). Holzherr insists that Benedict is too realistic to encourage members to adopt an other-worldly attitude toward material necessities. Some modern monasteries, especially of women, require strict budgeting from their members as a precaution against fiscal irresponsibility.

6.

The quotation of Acts 4:32 appears to give Benedict's argument a communitarian dimension. Gribomont, 1.254, approves of that, and thinks it shows that the chapter is Basilian in outlook. *RB 1980* also reads the quote as a testimony to Benedict's love for the common life as taught by Acts 4:32-35. A closer look at the quote shows, however, that it proves no such thing. Acts 4:32 says two things: (1) the primitive community shared their goods; (2) no one called anything his own. Benedict makes a critical alteration in the material by reversing the first and second members, enabling him to claim that things should be held in common *so that* no can call anything private property. This moves the discussion from the biblical realm of practical charity to that of individual asceticism where the great concern is to keep the mind pure from greedy thoughts (avarice). See Kardong, 21.13-17. It is possible, of course, to read *ne quisquam . . . praesumat* as a result clause, but that should be expressed by *ut non*. Lentini, 314, skirts the problem by rendering the verbs as parallel jussives.

presume to say (dicat vel praesumat), subordinating *dicere* along with *RB 1980*. Benedict adds "presume" to the text of Acts because of his indignation at such attitudes. A good alternative: "to call something his own or act like that is the case." The repetition of *praesumere* from v. 2 helps to form the chiasm: *dederit; praesumat; vitio*. See *Index:* Presump-tion.

7.

indulging (delectari). Lentini, 315, prefers "tendency." Probably the meaning is something like *amare,* used so frequently in RB 4 (see notes 4.64,68). The point may be that an acquisitive episode is not so reprehensible as an aggressive mentality.

is caught (deprehensus). Another possibility could be: "If anyone falls into (is surprised by) this detestable evil."

most detestable (nequissimo). Cassian calls avarice *nequissimus spiritus* in *inst.* 7.21. This then forms an inclusion with RB 33.1 (see notes) and seems to be the dominant influence on this chapter. See *Index:* Vice.

8.
punished (correptioni). The precise classical meaning is "verbally rebuked" (OLD) but that makes no sense here, for the culprit has already been warned twice (v. 7). Now is the time for action. See *Index:* Punishment.

XXXIV: SI OMNES AEQUALITER DEBEANT NECESSARIA ACCIPERE

[1]Sicut scriptum est: *Dividebatur singulis prout cuique opus erat.* [2]Ubi non dicimus ut personarum—quod absit—acceptio sit, sed infirmitatum consideratio; [3]ubi qui minus indiget agat Deo gratias et non contristetur, [4]qui vero plus indiget humilietur pro infirmitate, non extollatur pro misericordia; [5]et ita omnia membra erunt in pace. [6]Ante omnia, ne murmurationis malum pro qualicumque causa in aliquo qualicumque verbo vel significatione appareat; [7]quod si deprehensus fuerit, districtiori disciplinae subdatur.

RB 34: WHETHER ALL SHOULD RECEIVE NECESSITIES IN EQUAL MEASURE

1. As it is written: *It was distributed to each one according to need.* 2. By this we do not recommend favoritism—God forbid!—but sympathy for weaknesses. 3. So the one who needs less should thank God and not be sad. 4. And whoever needs more should be humble about his weaknesses and not gloat over the mercy shown him. 5. Thus all the members will be at peace. 6. Above all, the evil of murmuring must not appear for any cause by any word or gesture whatsoever. 7. If anyone is caught doing this, he should undergo a rather severe punishment.

RB 34 Notes

T
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Whether all (Si omnes). The title seems to be consciously matched with 33T, which also begins with *Si* (one of only four such in RB, the others being 29T and 68T). In fact, RB 34 is an original creation of Benedict, giving the appearance of a complement to RB 33: (1) The titles match. (2) RB 34 starts *ex abrupto* with commentary on Acts 4, which was also quoted near the end of RB 33. (3) 34.6, with its *ante omnia* and negative form, resembles 33.1. Perhaps they form an inclusion containing both chapters. (4) The title seems to prolong the discussion of *necessaria,* which 33.5 says are to be petitioned from the abbot. See Kardong, 21.192-193. Beyond formal considerations, the content of RB 34 is a perfect cenobitic balance to the ascetic, individual angle of vision that dominates the previous chapter. Even in size, the two chapters are like the matched leaves of a diptych. This is one of Benedict's most successful attempts to integrate Cassian's anchoritic viewpoint into the tradition of cenobitism (Kardong, 7.248-252).

1.

Augustine, *reg. serv.* 5.4-5,8-9, also quotes Acts 4:35 along with 4:32, but not in the twisted form given in RB 33 (see note 33.6). Vogüé, 2.564, says that RB 34 is "clearly Augustinian in its inspiration." In fact, a vast amount of the little Rule of Augustine (viz., 5,6 and 9) is devoted to the same question as RB 34: should all members of the community receive the same material means of life? In this matter, Benedict will not follow the absolute egalitarianism of Pachomius, *pr.* 81, but the realism of Augustine, based on the differing needs of individuals.

Vogüé, 6.881-883, lists the following parallels to the Rule of Augustine: RB 34T *omnes aequaliter: reg. serv.* 5.6-7; RB 34.1 *dividebatur singulis prout cuique opus erat: reg. serv.* 5.4-5 and 8-9; RB 34.2 *sed infirmitate consideratio: reg. serv.* 5.13; RB 34.3 *qui minus indiget: reg. serv.* 9.63; RB 34.4 *humilietur (. . .) non extollatur: reg. serv.* 6.20,24; RB 34.5 *omnia membra erunt in pace: reg. serv.* 6.29-30.

It was distributed . . . need (Dividebatur . . . opus erat). Because Acts 4:34 seems to show the first Christians pooling all their resources, it was sometimes thought they were the first cenobites (Cassian, *conf.* 18.5) or perhaps economic communists. A close reading, however, does not justify that conclusion. The imperfect tense "used to sell" indicates this was an occasional practice, or perhaps a generalization of the single case of Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37). The basic thrust of Acts 2 and 4 is practical charity and the relief of suffering, not a theory of radical egalitarianism. See *Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1968) 45.31. This is not to deny that Acts 2 and 4 were an inspiration for earlier cenobitism. See Morin, 2, esp. ch. 9.

2.

In RB 2.20, Benedict cites Romans 2:11, "God shows no partiality." Nevertheless, Romans 9:13, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated," seems to prove just the opposite. Such contradictions may be resolved at some profound level in Paul, but Benedict's point is simpler: Any preference in the monastery must be based on need and not the abbot's whim. The point is made in convincing fashion in 2.20-22, except that the criteria for preferential treatment given there are different: The abbot is only to advance monks beyond their rank if they show themselves "better in good actions and obedience."

favoritism . . . sympathy for the weak (personarum . . . acceptio . . . infirmitatum consideratio). English cannot reproduce the Latin play of words here. In 55.20, the need to care for the weak is also employed in a paradoxical aphorism: *consideret infirmitates indigentium; non malum voluntatem invidentium:* " . . . take into account the weaknesses of the needy, not the evil will of the envious." Another translation for *personarum acceptio* is "respect for persons," a term no longer understood by many speakers of modern English (see Kardong, 23.204-205). See *Index:* Favoritism, Honor.

weak (infirmitatum). The same term appears in Augustine, *reg. serv.* 5.13, but probably meant something different. In *reg. serv.* 5–6, he discusses at great length the problem of how to create one community from the rich and the poor. He freely acknowledges that those coming from a background of luxury will need mitigations unnecessary for a tough peasant. It seems that Benedict is thinking more of the physically frail than of the pampered rich. See Kardong, 21.195-196.

3.

be sad (contristetur). Benedict generally uses *contristari* in an causative sense: monks are not to sadden each other unnecessarily (see note 31.6). Here, however, there is no objective wrong, and the monk should not imagine there is. The problem is envy, a false perception that I need something someone else has. In fact, this is merely a matter of greed, for envy knows no bounds. See note 33.1 on avarice; see *Index:* Sadden.

4.

weakness (infirmitate), again as in 34.2 and 55.20, this word figures in a rhetorical comparison: *humilietur pro infirmitate, non extollatur pro misericordia:* "He should be humble over his weakness, and not gloat over the mercy shown him." See *Index:* Weakness.

humble (humilietur). There is a fine line between humility and humiliation, the latter being a purely negative idea. Nothing is gained if those

who receive what they need are also crushed by the experience. As Augustine explains in great detail, *reg. serv.* 9, those with great needs should perceive this as a weakness and not a source of privilege. In a consumerist society such as ours, the person who needs the most is the most highly valued. On the other hand, an ascetic movement such as monasticism often produces a kind of Pharisaism that finds it hard to accept mitigations, even when they are imperative. See *Index:* Humility.

mercy (misericordia). Benedict's system for the distribution of goods is not based on "rights," as are modern secular systems. Rather, it is a matter of "mercy" or compassion for the weaker members. Such a "system" can only be based on the divine largesse, as in Matthew 20:15: "Are you jealous because I am good?" Another biblical source for this thinking is the persistent attention Jesus gives to the marginal person (Matt 9:12): "It is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick." See *Index:* Mercy.

5.

members (membra). The reference is to 1 Corinthians 12:12,26, where Paul compares the Church to the human body. Although this is the only time Benedict employs this word or concept, it works well for his type of cenobitism. As with the body, the cenobium is a differentiated system with the members performing different roles and having different needs and capabilities. Another similarity between a human body and a community lies in the interconnection of the members: what affects one, affects all. See *Index:* Cenobitism.

peace (pax). Benedict is famous for his motto of Pax, but the word can mean many things. In this case, peace is not just an absence of interior psychological upheaval, but an objective situation where legitimate needs are being fulfilled. There will be no peace in society when this is not the case. According to Paul VI: "If you want peace, create justice." As we pointed out in note 32.4, the justice required by Benedict is not mechanical, distributive justice, but the personal care of the abbot based on the divine generosity. See Kardong, 5.32; 21.197. See *Index:* Peace.

6.

any cause . . . any word (qualicumque . . . qualicumque). At times, Benedict seems to become overwrought, causing him to indulge in verbal overkill: see also 7.63; 33.3; 46.1-4; 71.6-9. Some of these pyrotechnics are a welcome relief from the prudent, balanced but boring Benedict of hagiography. Nevertheless, one must be ready to add a grain of salt to these apodictic passages. In 41.5 for example, Benedict admits that some murmuring is justified. See Kardong, 3.50-55.

cause (causa). Most translations put the emphasis on the individual monk, but Salzburg, 159, seems also to ban the *cause* for grumbling, namely, inequitable distribution, which is one of the things that RB 34 seeks to eliminate.

murmuring (murmurationis) is a special bane of Benedict, but it usually has a rather vague meaning. Here, however, it has a rather precise connotation: The biblical root of murmuring is to be found in the Exodus, where Israel complained bitterly against Yahweh and Moses for leading them out to the desert to suffer hardships (Exod 15:24, etc.). Their sin was to forget the blessing of liberation from the slavery of Egypt. Likewise, the monk who complains has usually lost sight of the fundamental blessing of his vocation. Another instructive biblical passage is Luke 15:2, where the Pharisees murmur against Jesus for reaching out to sinners and misfits. The strong monk who envies the favor shown the weak one manifests similar symptoms of ingratitude. See Kardong, 22.8; see *Index:* Murmur.

Above all (Ante omnia) could form an inclusion with 33.1: *praecipue*. The same might be said for *murmurationis malum,* which matches *hoc vitium*. The evil in 33.1 is avarice, treated largely as a personally destructive "thought." Murmuring, however, is a social evil, as harmful to the listener as it is to the speaker.

rather severe (districtioni) can be translated as a true comparative (more severe) but there is no definite point of comparison since Benedict's penal "code" is vague and really no system at all (see note 3.10).

RB 33–34 Overview

A. Poverty as a Biblical and Monastic Value

The use of this world's goods has always been a concern of monks, and indeed, of all Christians. This theme is perhaps not at the center of biblical spirituality, but nevertheless it is important enough to receive some attention in both testaments. For the Jewish Bible, the basic attitude toward possessions is positive: to have an abundance of goods is a sign of God's blessing (Ps 65:4-5). Nevertheless, it was recognized that community could be destroyed by the avarice of some (Amos 4:1-13), and that wealth could blunt the felt need of the individual for God (Prov 30:8).

Perhaps because Jesus himself was relatively poor, there is little talk in the New Testament about the blessing of riches, but an increasing appreciation of the spiritual value of poverty. This new attitude takes the same forms as in the Jewish Bible: In Matthew 6:25-34, simplicity

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of life is extolled as a means to highlight the truth that we are in fact utterly dependent on God. In the wake of the resurrection, Acts 2:44 and 4:32-35 show the first disciples pooling their resources as a means of building a true community of spirits.

The early monks attempted to put this gospel value into literal practice and their reasons for doing so often follow the biblical patterns. Thus the RM 16 invokes Matthew 6:25-34 on freedom from cares when it describes the work of the cellarer in providing for the needs of the monks. And RM 82 is not hesitant to associate dependency on the abbot with dependency on God. The same text employs the argument that monks who have given up self-will should surely give up material possessions, for the first is far more personal and costly than the second. The Master has probably drawn that argument from Basil, *reg.* 29.

Besides these scriptural sources for monastic poverty, there is also the theme of avarice from Greco-Roman philosophical circles and later given a Christian interpretation by Evagrius and Cassian. According to this theory, the desire for possessions is a very dangerous passion because it knows no limits. As such it cannot be merely controlled; it must be completely eradicated. As insightful as this theory may be, it seems to suggest that material goods as such are evil. That is a heresy that the Bible carefully avoids, but one which monks have sometimes fallen into. For background on monastic poverty, see Vogüé, 23.99-112, and Böckmann, 1.131-165.

B. RB 33: Dispossession

When Benedict came to deal with the question of how the monks are to use material goods, he had a variety of traditional approaches from which to choose. We have seen that he presents the cellarer (RB 31) as an official who must take good care of people by supplying their physical needs in a sensitive way. As we shall see, this same care for communal peace and harmony is evident in the distribution of goods in RB 34. In both cases, the addressee is the person who must supply the needs of others. See Kardong, 21.184-192.

The presupposition here is that the monks of the cenobium have nothing of their own, which is not a normal human condition. Granted, Jesus sometimes asked individuals to leave all to follow him (Matt 19:21) and a few people in the earliest Church did exhibit extraordinary detachment from their personal possessions (e.g., Barnabas in Acts 4:36-37). Yet it is not something the Bible demands of Christians, nor has it been part of ordinary Christian practice. Faced with this slim tradition, Benedict turns to Cassian's theory of avarice which is given great development in *inst.* 7.

The first clue that RB 33 is heavily based on Cassian lies in the realm of structure. The first verse quotes *inst.* 7.21 directly, and Benedict turns to the same text in 33.7. When an ancient author makes the same point at the beginning and the end of a treatise, it is often done to "frame" the whole argument in a certain way (see Borias, 16.266ff.). The suggestion here is that Cassian's view of avarice is key to this chapter.

This suspicion is corroborated by the fact that the title of the chapter can be interpreted as referring to the *thought* of possession rather than to the actual fact. That title is drawn from Basil, *reg.* 29, a glance at which shows that he is more concerned with the attitude of the monk than with the fact of possessions. In fact, no one can live without using the things of the earth; monastic poverty depends on our degree of attachment to them. For Cassian as well, avarice is basically a question of attitude more than fact. See note 33T.

Finally, Benedict's treatment of Acts 4:34 betrays a strong interest in the ascetical and individual aspect of the question. This is a confusing aspect in the interpretation of RB 33 because Acts 4:32-35 is itself quite unconcerned with anything but practical charity. Thus Benedict has to seriously remodel the quote in order to make it prove what he wants to prove. It is not one of the happier moments in the history of the patristic use of biblical testimonials. See note on 33.6.

Besides the fact that RB 33.1 and 7 seem to form an inclusion, there are further correspondences between vv. 1-3 and 5b-7 that have led critics to see a chiastic pattern in this chapter. A. Böckmann, 6.370, concludes that 33.4 is the center of this structure and therefore may provide the conceptual heart of the material. The teaching found there, namely, that since the monk has given up his very self, therefore he should eschew material possessions, is an idea also found in RB 58.25. Since that is so, it cannot be treated as an incidental comment.

J. Gribomont, 1.254-255, argues that this is a Basilian idea, which suggests that the Cappadoccian father (and not Cassian) should be regarded as the main influence on RB 33. He goes further to say that Basil means that the monk has given over his entire life to the community. But that seems to be reading too much into Benedict's use of this Basilian saying. Gribomont tries to bolster his argument by pointing to Benedict's quote of Acts 4:34, which is also used by Basil in *reg.* 29. As I pointed out in note 33.6, however, Benedict turns the meaning of this text inside out and does not use it to foster communal values.

Another structuralist reading of RB 33, this time by A. Borias, 2.30-32, sees v. 5a as the center of the pattern. Now the principle is that one should rely on the abbot for everything. For Borias, this considerably softens the harsh ascetical tone of the chapter and keeps it firmly fixed in the context of cenobitic reliance on the humane and discerning care of the abbot.

Vogüé, 6.879-880, agrees that RB 33 directs everything to the abbot, but he does not feel that this softens the tone of the chapter. In fact, he considers it one of Benedict's fiercest pages and more of an attack than anything else. While I concur that RB 33 is ferocious, I wonder whether this quality might not be due to Benedict's dependence on Cassian's theory of avarice. As we saw above (Part A), that view requires that every bit of the avaricious mentality must be extirpated if it is to be killed. The image itself seems to require rhetorical vehemence (see note 33.1). Vogüé, 877-878, admits that Cassian is the main influence, so this would follow his own analysis of sources.

In summing up this disagreement among structuralist critics, it seems necessary to point out that there is a good deal of subjective content in their work. As far as I can see, there is no compelling reason to prefer either RB 33.4 or 5a as the core verse of this chapter. Therefore, one must make a choice on other grounds, and for that reason I prefer 33.4, because it seems to be in harmony with the individual, ascetic flavor of this chapter. For truly communal values, one must wait for the next chapter.

C. RB 34: Proper Distribution

Indeed, it looks very much as RB 34 was meant by Benedict to be a continuation of the issues taken up in the previous chapter. Without the slightest transition or pause, the first verse again takes up Acts 4, which had been at issue at the end of RB 33. The title that intervenes does not form much of a boundary since it is obviously written to match the title of RB 33 (see note 34T). Moreover, the last part of RB 34 seems to create an inclusion with the first part of RB 33, leaving the impression that the two chapters really form one unit (see note 34.6).

Now, however, Benedict treats Acts 4 with considerably more respect for its original intent than he did in RB 33.6. Not only has he left the wording intact, but he has taken the same basic tack as Acts does in regard to material possessions: Christians should use them to succor the needs of others and to build community. We are now in the realm of practical charity promoted by the New Testament; gone is the Stoic and anchoritic concern to protect the individual soul from destructive thoughts such as avarice.

In addition to the Acts of the Apostles, RB 34, like RB 33 is heavily based on a patristic source. This time, however, it is Augustine, and the text is his little monastic Rule *(reg. serv.)*. The very framing of the question is Augustinian: "Should each one receive the same necessities?" (Probably the term should be "provisions"; see note 34T.) From there on, virtually every verse seems based on Augustine (see note 34.1).

Augustine's basic attitude toward the distribution of material goods is not egalitarian in any simple sense. Unlike Pachomius' apparent policy (*pr.* 81) that each monk gets exactly the same treatment, Augustine's principle is that each one gets only what he needs. That is a very different thing, since human needs can vary widely, and especially in Augustine's community where there seems to have been tremendous differences in socioeconomic background. Very rich, sophisticated Christians were trying to live the common life with poor peasants. To judge from the fact that Augustine spends about a quarter of his entire Rule on the issue (*reg. serv.* 5,6 and 9), this fact must have greatly complicated life in the monastic community at Hippo.

In Augustine's opinion, the rich simply cannot live with as little as the poor can. They will have to be pampered to some extent, but at least they should realize that this is because of their weakness and not their formerly exalted social position. The North African writer had lived with the wealthy, so he is realistic about their situation, but he spends most of his time in the Rule addressing the poor peasants. In a powerful and subtle way, he warns them not to give way to envy because the formerly rich are given mitigations. To do so would be to lose the entire merit of their own strict monastic observance.

For his part, Benedict greatly reduces Augustine's material so there is no possibility of reproducing its distinctions and nuances. Furthermore, he seems to envisage the case of the sickly monk and not the rich one (Vogüé, 6.881-885), so the problem is not so complex. Nonetheless, he is able to distill Augustine's essential doctrine without loss. Benedict does not expand on the envy of the strong to the extent Augustine does, but balances his concern for both weak and strong (34.3-4). This reminds us of the balanced saying of 64.19: "(the abbot) must arrange everything so the strong have something to strive for and the weak nothing to run from."

It is hard to know the precise economic conditions of Benedict's monks both before and after they entered the monastery. At times he chides them for complaining about shortages (40.8-9) and about ordinary hard labor (48.7-9), so they probably were not of the peasant class. Still, there are enough clues in the Rule to indicate that the community itself was not in easy material circumstances. See Böckmann, 3.190.

At any rate, Benedict's whole thrust in RB 34 is faithful to that of Augustine. At the very beginning of his Rule, the latter quotes Acts 2:44: "The whole community of believers was of one mind and heart." The remainder of the document is little more than a commentary on that verse, to the extent that everything is discussed from the standpoint of community-building. Thus Augustine's real interest in the

question of the use of goods is strictly instrumental: they must be used to knit the community closer together in love.

That same attitude is patently evident in RB 34.5: "In this way all the members will be at peace." This verse with Pauline overtones (1 Cor 12:12,26) is the spiritual heart of the chapter, so it needs careful examination. It is clearly meant to provide theological justification for the special system of distribution that the author has created. Unequal distribution may not be justifiable on the basis of strict distributive justice but it is used in the monastic community because it is the teaching of the Bible and also because it works well in a small community composed of voluntary members. See Kardong, 21.192-201.

The Pauline language of "members" is worth noting in itself. Though this is the only time Benedict invokes it, he might well have made more use of it in his Rule, since it is one of the most powerful images imaginable of a social body (see note 34.5). In such a body, there is a hierarchy and differentiation of the parts and their functions. It is recognized that the various parts have different needs, and it is vital to the interests of all the parts that each gets what it needs. Such is their interdependence that all the parts will suffer if they do not.

When we have taken this bodily image into careful account, we are in a position to understand what "peace" means in this verse. The term is not mentioned in RB 33, but the whole interest of that chapter is to create and preserve the private "peace of mind" that comes when the vice of avarice is not allowed to rule the individual. That kind of peace is not unimportant, but it is not the peace of RB 34.

In this chapter, the concern is for social harmony. As in Acts 2:44, the need is to create a community of united minds and hearts. In this context, peace can only come about and be maintained when the members' legitimate needs are being met. Of course it is important that people are happy, but RB 34 believes that can only happen when concrete questions of material need are addressed. In other words, the approach here is very similar to that of the Bible, where peace is grounded on a foundation of social justice.

Even though Benedict does not emphasize the strong over the weak in RB 34, he cannot pass up the opportunity to end with a note on "murmuring," which only concerns those tempted to envy. Although this favorite theme of Benedict usually remains somewhat opaque and without context, in this particular case it seems possible to say more about it.

The murmuring of the strong monk over the special treatment of weak brothers betrays a misunderstanding of some very important realities. On the psychological level the envious monk shows that he needs to bolster his sense of self-worth by accumulating objects. But

Benedict flies in the face of that consumerist ideology by declaring in 33.4 that it is a weakness to need more. The monastic mentality reckons it a virtue to need less, and someone who does so should be satisfied and happy.

But the murmuring of RB 34 can also be connected with some biblical texts that give it considerable theological depth. When the Israelites complain in Exodus 15:24 that they wish they were back at the fleshpots of Egypt, they show they do not appreciate the liberation Yahweh has wrought for them. Likewise, when the Pharisees grumble in Luke 15:2 that Jesus is reaching out to sinners and other marginal persons, the implication is that they themselves are not satisfied by the grace God has lavished on them. So murmuring signifies a basic lack of gratitude for one's own status as a forgiven and graced sinner. In this sense, it is not a human foible but a serious spiritual fault. See *Index:* Murmur.

XXXV: DE SEPTIMANARIIS COQUINAE

[1]Fratres sibi invicem serviant, ut nullus excusetur a coquinae officio, nisi aut aegritudo, aut in causa gravis utilitatis quis occupatus fuerit, [2]quia exinde maior merces et caritas acquiritur. [3]Imbecillibus autem procurentur solacia, ut non cum tristitia hoc faciant; [4]sed habeant omnes solacia secundum modum congregationis aut positionem loci. [5]Si maior congregatio fuerit, cellararius excusetur a coquina, vel si qui, ut diximus, maioribus utilitatibus occupantur; [6]ceteri sibi sub caritate invicem serviant.

[7]Egressurus de septimana sabbato munditias faciat. [8]Lintea cum quibus sibi fratres manus aut pedes tergunt lavent. [9]Pedes vero tam ipse qui egreditur quam ille qui intraturus est omnibus lavent. [10]Vasa ministerii sui munda et sana cellarario reconsignet; [11]qui cellararius item intranti consignet, ut sciat quod dat aut quod recipit.

[12]Septimanarii autem ante unam horam refectionis accipiant super statutam annonam singulas biberes et panem, [13]ut hora refectionis sine murmuratione et gravi labore serviant fratribus suis. [14]In diebus tamen sollemnibus usque ad missas sustineant.

[15]Intrantes et exeuntes hebdomadarii in oratorio mox matutinis finitis dominica omnibus genibus provolvantur postulantes pro se orari. [16]Egrediens autem de septimana dicat hunc versum: *Benedictus es, Domine Deus,* qui *adiuvasti me et consolatus es me;* [17]quo dicto tertio accepta benedictione egrediens, subsequatur ingrediens et dicat: *Deus in adiutorium meum intende, Domine ad adiuvandum me festina,* [18]et hoc idem tertio repetatur ab omnibus et accepta benedictione ingrediatur.

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RB 35: THE WEEKLY KITCHEN SERVERS

1. The brothers should serve one another. Therefore no one may be excused from kitchen duty except for illness or occupation with an essential task, 2. for thus is merit increased and love built up. 3. Let help be provided for the weak so they do not lose heart in this work, 4. but let all have help according to the size of the community or the circumstances of the place. 5. If the community is rather large, the cellarer should be excused from the kitchen. As we have said, those occupied with essential tasks should also be excused. 6. The others should serve one another in love.

7. One who is about to complete the week's work should do the cleaning on Saturday. 8. They should wash the towels the brothers use to dry their hands and feet. 9. Moreover, both the one completing service and the one beginning it should wash the feet of all. 10. He should return the utensils of his service to the cellarer clean and intact. 11. The cellarer should, in his turn, give them to the one entering the week, noting what he gives out and what he receives back.

12. One hour before mealtime, the weekly servers should each receive a drink and a piece of bread over and above the standard portion. 13. Then they can serve the brethren at mealtime without grumbling and undue fatigue. 14. On solemn feast days, however, they should wait till the final meal prayer.

15. As soon as Sunday Lauds is finished, both the beginning and the finishing weekly servers should bow before the knees of all in the oratory, begging for prayers. 16. The one finishing the week should say this verse: *Blessed are you, Lord God, for you have aided me and comforted me*. 17. When this has been repeated three times and the departing server has received the blessing, the one entering upon service should say: *God, come to my assistance; Lord, hasten to help me*. 18. This verse too should be repeated three times by all. He should be blessed and let him then begin his week of service.

RB 35 Notes

T

Cassian, *inst.* 4.18-22, says weekly kitchen service is an Oriental custom and not an Egyptian one, but Jerome claims the Pachomians practiced it in Upper Egypt (*praef. in reg. S. Pach*. 2). See Vogüé 8.89.

kitchen (coquinae). In simple cultures the kitchen controls the garden and farm. Most likely the term includes at least cooking, table-waiting and housework in RB 35 (Böckmann, 10.268-269).

1.

serve one another (sibi invicem serviant). RM 18 begins the discussion of the weekly kitchen service with a tedious explanation of how the deaneries and deans are to rotate in this service. Benedict, however, makes his essential spiritual point in the first sentence: mutual service. This shows that he is not merely concerned to create a smoothly functioning system, but a framework in which charity can flourish. See *Index:* Service. Böckmann, 10.271, shows that 35.1-6 is a carefully constructed ring-composition, with vv. 1a and 6 forming a frame on the theme "serve one another." Inside this inclusio, she sees 1b-5 (excusing causes), 3a-4 (needed help) and 3b (central aphorism: work without sadness) as concentric circles.

brothers (fratres) is a fitting term for this chapter, devoted as it is to the service of mutual charity. In the act of feeding one another, the brothers perform a task based on the ministry of Jesus, with its emphasis on the meal as primary symbol of selfless service. See *Index:* Brother.

kitchen duty (coquinae officio). In 38.11 Benedict distinguishes cooks and waiters, calling the latter *servitores* (Lentini, 323). Since cooking takes much more time than waiting, it would occupy most of the workday of the monk and thus necessitate the exemption of such officials as the cellarer. Modern monasteries often employ full-time professional cooks, but the monks themselves wait on table a week at a time.

illness (aegritudo). The nominative case given here is grammatically anomalous, so Vogüé, 2.566, suggests that it is an addition. Sickness is not mentioned as an excuse along with essential work in 35.5. Unlike RM 69, Benedict does not suspect the sick on principle.

essential task (gravis utilitatis). Probably the reference here is to the abbot or perhaps the cellarer, of whom it is said explicitly in 35.5 that he should be excused from kitchen duty if the community is large. Caesarius, *serm.* 196.2, lays down the same criteria for absence at the Divine Office. No excusing causes from table service are mentioned by Cassian or the Master. Böckmann, 10.273, notes how *utilitas* is a truly communal word because it refers to what is objectively useful for the group rather than what is gratifying to the individual. Thus, someone may prefer to cook or scrub floors, but is more useful as a financial officer.

2.

merit increased and love built up (maior merces et caritas adquiritur). Strictly speaking, *adquiritur* only fits with *maior merces:* a greater reward is obtained. This is also the claim in 36.5, which looks like the original formulation, to which *caritas* has been added in this verse.

"Built up" has been added to the translation to complete "love." Rochais, 101, reads *merces et caritas* as epexegetical: the reward of love. The contemporary sensibility, of course, prefers love to reward as a spiritual goal, but Benedict does not hesitate to promise merit for good acts. Holzherr, 205, notes that even Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:3) offers rewards such as the "kingdom of heaven" to the "poor in spirit." See *Index:* Love, Merit.

for thus (exinde). The logic could be that one who is sick or occupied, and therefore not able to serve in the kitchen, should not worry because no spiritual merit will be lost. Another interpretation would have this last clause refer to the whole phenomenon of the brethren serving each other through the service of cooking and serving at table. Benedict offers a rather pragmatic view of love: it will be increased when we do deeds of love for one another (Böckmann, 275).

3.

weak (imbecillibus). The weak are a great concern for Benedict, as is witnessed by the frequency of terms like *imbecillis* (35.3; 37.2; 40.3; 48.25), but also *infirmus,* which occurs no less than twenty-two times. Not only can kitchen work be heavy, but the responsibility of providing palatable food for a large group of people can bring with it considerable psychological pressure. This verse is a good example of Benedict's shrewd psychology: He does not excuse the weak entirely from service but brings them into the common life by giving them sufficient assistance. This seems like a practical implementation of RB 64.19: "(The abbot) must so arrange everything that the strong have something to yearn for and the weak nothing to run from." It takes more empathy to work *with* the weak than to do everything yourself (Böckmann, 10.275). See *Index:* Weakness.

help (solacia). Benedict's practicality comes through in the provision that people get the help they need to fulfill their duties. The same point is made in 31.17 (cellarer) and 53.18-20 (guestmaster). The term "solace" in English means comfort, and that is also the primary meaning in Latin (OLD), but Benedict seems to give it an especially concrete connotation. It does not help to console the workers verbally if one does not give them assistance. Conversely, workers cannot expect assistance if they do not make their needs known (Böckmann, 10.276). See *Index:* Help.

lose heart in the work (cum tristitia hoc faciant). Sadness *(tristitia/contristari)* is a great concern for Benedict, who sees it as corrosive of monastic morale and charity. Larmann, 1.159-174, points out that Benedict is especially concerned that monks do not "sadden" each

other by insensitive behavior. In this case, it is inconsiderate to neglect to give people the help they need to do their work well. The point is repeated in 35.13, and is in fact one of Benedict's main themes: the monastic life is nothing if it is not joyful (see note 5.16). See *Index:* Sadness.

4.
size of the community or the circumstances of the place (modum congregationis aut positionem loci) suggests that the Rule was written for several communities and not just Monte Cassino (Böckmann, 10.276).

5.
rather numerous (maior). This specification shows that *modum* in the previous verse refers to size. RB 21.1 shows that Benedict's community may have been fairly large. In RM, the cellarer never serves in the kitchen. Thus the title of RM 21 speaks of the "cellarer and the kitchen servers."

6.
in love (sub caritate). Lentini, 325, remarks that Christian love was the only motivation adequate to bring about the leveling of the members in ancient society. By requiring all monks, whether rich or poor, slave or free, to serve in the kitchen, Benedict and other monastic legislators were flying in the face of the considerable class differences that fractured society at that time. Lentini points to Galatians 5:13 as the biblical foundation of this verse. He also notes that *sub caritate* could mean "because of love" in Late Latin, giving the verse an even stronger flavor. While RM 18.8 and 25.4 refer to this work as "humility of service," Benedict prefers to see love as the basic motivation. Since all the monks and not just the youngest or least learned must participate in kitchen service, humility might upset the egalitarian principle (Böckmann, 10.278). See *Index:* Love.

7.
one who is about to complete (egressurus). Here Benedict uses the singular, but in vv. 8-9, he uses the plural. Then in v. 10 he reverts to the singular. It could be that Benedict assumes that in normal conditions, only one cook will be needed for the week. Nevertheless, RM (18–19) arranges for two cooks, and it is generally assumed that Benedict's community was larger than that of the Master. It may also be that Benedict is a bit careless in these verses (Borias, 10.285-287), or that someone else has added material. Böckmann, 10.278-279, however, perceives another ring-composition in 35.7-11: vv. 7,11: outgoing, incoming brother; vv. 8,10: clean things; v. 9: washing of the feet. In this

scheme, the washing of the feet is the featured member. A ring-composition is not carelessly composed.

weekly (septimana) service was probably modeled on the temple service in ancient Israel (Holzherr, 205).

do the cleaning (munditias faciat) was the ancient expression for a general housecleaning (Lentini, 326). If it were just a question of washing *(RB 1980),* the term would be *lavare.* It is noteworthy that Benedict wants the person going off duty to leave things clean for the one coming on duty. The same principle applies to the cleaning of tools in RB 32.

8.

They should wash (lavent). Perhaps the washing was heavy enough that both the one completing the week and the one beginning the week would need to work together (Lentini, 326). The washing of towels and feet go together because of the need for hot water (Böckmann, 10.280).

9.

the feet of all (Pedes . . . omnibus). RM 30.3-7 requires that the kitchen servers wash the feet of all the brothers and guests daily, not just weekly as in this verse. Since feet were washed daily in ancient times, Benedict's weekly ritual must be symbolic. The same is true of Cassian, *inst.* 4.19 (Böckmann, 10.281). The washing of feet, of course, can hardly be separated from John 13 and the example of Jesus, the leader and master who served all. Cassian says this foot washing was in response to the command of Christ. See *Index:* Foot washing.

10.

service (ministerii) has no necessary religious connotation, but since Benedict attaches such importance to kitchen service as a labor of love (v. 6), it is not hard to imagine that the term *ministerium* can have Christian overtones. See *Index:* Service.

utensils (vasa) were no doubt of metal and therefore precious in themselves. In RB 31.10 the cellarer is to treat them like the very vessels of the altar.

11.

the cellarer (qui cellararius) is obviously in charge of the kitchen and acts as a control on the utensils, which are not to pass directly from one server to the next (Lentini, 327).

what he gives out and receives back (quod dat et quod recipit). The principle is established in RB 32, where the abbot is to function in the same

fashion. This practical advice is quite appropriate for a cenobitic community, where everyone and no one owns things.

12.

Böckmann, 10.283, treats vv. 12-14 as an inclusion, since the first and third verses describe the concrete practice and the center verse (13) provides the spiritual motivation. Thus the ring structure occurs three times: 1-6; 7-11; 12-14.

One hour before mealtime (ante unam horam refectionis). B. Steidle, 3 and 4, followed by Vogüé, Salzburg and Böckmann, suggests that the true meaning here is that the table-waiters should receive a bit of food previous to the single meal of the day. Although the Latin can conceivably be construed that way, the translation given here seems preferable. Benedict assumes that there will be only one meal on ordinary days (3 P.M.) and days of fasting (6 P.M.). In v. 13 he deals with the exception, namely, feast days when there are two meals, the first being at noon. The Master does not permit this indulgence to the waiters, warning them in RM 21.8 to not eat between the Communion Service which precedes the meal and the start of the meal itself. Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 14, is like Benedict in providing a "thick drink" *(merus)* for the cooks before the meal.

13.

without grumbling and undue fatigue (sine murmuratione et gravi labore). Grumbling (murmuring) is Benedict's bane, but he recognizes that there are unnecessary hardships that cause people to complain justifiably. In this case, the table-waiters would have to eat after the regular diners, when the food will be somewhat cold and stale. Consequently, he spares them this unnecessary hardship by granting them a small snack before the meal. See *Index:* Murmur.

serve their brothers (serviant fratribus suis). Serving the brothers is mentioned three times in this chapter (vv. 1,6,13) and forms a veritable leitmotif. It is indeed the central meaning of the cenobitic life. Augustine, *reg.* 5.9, has a similar saying: "Let them serve the brothers without murmuring." See *Index:* Service.

14.

until the final meal prayer (usque ad missas). Here we agree with Steidle, 9.230-232, who interprets *missas* as the closing prayers of the meal and not the Mass. He is joined in this by most commentators, but not by Lentini, 329, who sticks to the traditional idea that reference is to the Conventual Mass, that immediately precedes the meal. Since he also holds to the one-hour rule (v. 12), this would cause the table-wait-

ers to break the Eucharistic fast of that time. Yet another interpretation is offered by Holzherr, 206, who thinks that the subject of 35.14 is not the waiters at all, but the other monks. They ought not to "press toward the meal," thus forcing the waiters to leave before the dismissal of the Eucharist. For *missas,* see *RB 1980,* 410-412; see *Index: Missas.*

15.

both the beginning and finishing weekly servers (Intrantes et exeuntes). The Latin says literally, "entering and exiting," so no substantive is needed, but the English "beginning and ending" demands one. Furthermore, Benedict seems unconcerned to maintain either a consistent singular or plural in this chapter, leaving us to wonder just how many kitchen servers there were in his monastery.

weekly servers (hebdomedarii). Benedict uses a rather rich vocabulary for the servers, calling them *septimanarii* in 35.12 and *hebdomedarii* here, the two words being simply the Latin and Greek ways of indicating a week. Add to this the term *ministerium* (v. 10) and *servire* (vv. 1,6,13) and one gets the impression he is concerned to use a varied vocabulary in this chapter. See *Index:* Service.

For Cassian, *inst.* 4.19.3, the week of service begins on Monday, which RM 24.7 changes to Sunday. Cassian, *inst.* 4.3, has a profound bow, while RM 19.4 has prostration. RM 25.4 has the weekly servers ask for a blessing, but RM 19.2-3 delegates the request to the deans. Vogüé, 2.568-569.

in the oratory (in oratorio). The blessing of the kitchen crew (as well as the table-reader, RB 38) does not take place in the refectory or kitchen but in the oratory. This is a sign that Benedict tends to identify the two places and the two activities, prayer and shared meals. It also shows how important the humble service of the kitchen is in the religious system of Benedict.

bow (provolvantur). Benedict may follow Cassian, *inst.* 2.18, in avoiding the kneeling posture on Sunday, which was prohibited by the Council of Nicea (canon 20). See Mundó, 4.177-191; Vogüé, 28.233-264. *Provolvantur* can also mean "prostrate" (OLD), but that would be at the "feet" *(pedibus)* of the brethren (see 44.2,4; 58.23).

Lauds (matutinis). Unlike modern monastic terminology, Benedict calls the night prayer "Vigils" and the morning prayer "Matins." For us, the night prayer is "Matins" and the morning prayer "Lauds." See notes 12T; 12.1; 12.3.

16.

you have aided me and comforted me (adjuvasti me et consolatus es me).

Probably the chief attraction of this psalm text is that it is in the past tense. Vogüé, 6.1028, thinks that the corresponding prayer in RM 25.4-7, which speaks of "those who hate me," refers to the devil. Böckmann, 10.287, however, thinks it may refer to the criticism that monastic cooks would undergo since they were "amateurs." At any rate, Benedict leaves this prayer out.

17.

When this has been repeated three times . . . the one entering upon service should say (quo dicto tertio . . . subsequetur ingrediens et dicat). The very grammar of this sentence shows how Benedict makes the service of the community, and the blessing attached to it, a continuous and unbroken stream. It is assumed that the community repeats the triple invocation after the server, as they do in the next verse, and also in 38.3 (blessing of the table-waiter) and 58.22 (reception of a new member). The significance of this triple antiphonal chant is to symbolize the communal nature of all monastic roles and offices (Lentini, 331).

18.

God, come to my assistance; Lord, hasten to help me (Deus in adjutorium meum intende; Domine ad adjuvandum me festina). Psalm 69:2, made famous by John Cassian, *conf.* 10.10, as the most efficacious prayer mantra, is also a favorite of Benedict. He uses it to begin each of the Day Hours (17.3; 18.1). See note 18.1.

blessing (benedictione) refers to that which the abbot bestows on the servers, but it also implies that God is blessing them. In that sense, their service is an offering placed before the divine altar and found pleasing by the Almighty (Holzherr, 206). See *Index:* Blessing.

RB 35 Overview

A. Preliminary Issues

The kitchen service in cenobitic monasteries is a theme discussed by the whole tradition. For Pachomius, it is done on a weekly basis as are all of the domestic jobs in the community (*pr.* 15,23,27,64,129). Cassian, *inst.* 4.19-22, contradicts this, saying that such was the custom in the East but not in Egypt. Yet Cassian never visited the Pachomian foundations personally, so he must have been basing his report on northern Egypt. He also supplies us with fairly detailed descriptions of the blessing of the weekly servers. By the time of Benedict, virtually all the monasteries in Italy and the West followed the custom of a weekly rotation of cooks and waiters. For a complete study of RB 35, see Vogüé, 6.979-1031, on which much of this Overview is based.

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As in so many cases, Benedict has quarried the Rule of the Master for his treatise on the servers. The Master has a great deal to say about the subject, spending no less than parts of seven chapters on the question (RM 18–23 and 25). Benedict manages to avoid the prolixity of this mass of detail by dropping RM 20–23 and contradicting RM 21. He concentrates mostly on the underlying spiritual and humane purposes of kitchen service, adding significant details that concretize his vision of the monastic refectory as the site of mutual charity.

While RB 35 is the first of several chapters devoted to monastic meals (38–41), it also carries forward certain themes that precede it. Just as RB 33 speaks of the need for material dispossession, this chapter forbids the hoarding of personal talent and energy; each one must share himself in the form of mutual service. The same can be said for RB 36, on the care of the sick. Like RB 34 on the proper distribution of goods, RB 35 also insures communal peace by insisting that each monk serve the whole congregation to the best of his ability.

Concerning the structure and composition of RB 35, Borias, 10.285-287, notes that vv. 1-6 form a carefully crafted chiasm, but he considers the rest of the chapter somewhat loosely organized. In her full-scale study of the chapter, however, Böckmann, 10.266-292, comes to a different conclusion. She shows that vv. 7-11 and 12-14 are also ring-compositions, forming a remarkable series of three. Moreover, there is an alternating pattern whereby vv. 1-6 match vv. 12-14 by using mostly the plural number, while vv. 7-11 and 15-18 use mostly the singular. This latter pair is concerned with exit and entry, so there is another commonality. The result of Böckmann's work is to demonstrate that RB 35 is a carefully considered composition. The content of the chapter bears out that evaluation.

B. The Themes of the Chapter

1. The Humanity of Love

When we examine RB 35.1-6 against the background of its sources, we note a remarkable movement in the direction of delicacy and sensitivity to human needs. The main theme, of course, is love demonstrated by practical service in a menial task, namely, the cooking and serving of food. Benedict mentions love *(caritas)* twice (2,6) so it is not a cliché but a deliberate emphasis. Compared to this, the Master speaks of the "humility of service," (18.8; 25.4) which is a worrisome concept, given the propensity of ancient societies to relegate menial tasks to the lower orders. It is true that Benedict also proposes "reward" *(merces)* as the result of service, yet he does not emphasize it nearly as heavily as Cassian, who mentions it four times in *inst.* 4.19,20,21b.

One of the important sub-themes of this section is the need for dispensations from kitchen work for certain monks. Again, this is not an *obiter dictum* but a repeated point, which occurs in 35.1 and 5. It is significant that neither Cassian nor the Master mentions such dispensations, which does not mean they are opposed to them but which could indicate they are less familiar with the actual workings of cenobitic life. As a matter of fact, there are so many different essential public functions in a large cenobium that it is impossible to concentrate on any one service as mandatory for all (see note 35.1 on *utilitas*).

Along the same lines, Benedict insists that the kitchen servers receive sufficient help in their work, a theme that he repeats for the cellarer (31.17) and the guestmaster (53.18). The Master also arranges for kitchen help in 19.18 and 21.6,14, so that the service be unfailingly prompt and the abbot not be vexed by delay. Benedict's reason is very different, and it is entirely characteristic of the difference between the two personalities: the servers need help so that they not be weighed down with sadness (35.3)

But what about the singular number that occurs five times in this chapter? Are we really sure there were multiple cooks and table-servers? Practical experience shows that kitchen service for a community of more than, say, a dozen requires more than one person. Vogüé, 6.1019, notes that "help" (35.3) is plural *(solacia)* which may be a clue. But even more convincing is his comment that Benedict probably wants a head cook to supervise the kitchen activities (6.1021).

From these remarks, the practical humanity of Benedict ought to be clear enough. It should be added that his understanding of Christian charity is outstandingly complete, for he sees that it is not a one-way street. Of course the servers carry out deeds of evangelical charity toward the community, but Benedict wants it remembered that they too need to be cared for. In at least two other chapters, namely RB 31 on the cellarer and RB 36 on the nurse, the same well-rounded theology of service is articulated. See 28.31.

2. Another Mitigation

We have seen that Benedict has made numerous mitigations in the monastic tradition of the kitchen service. It remains to discuss what is perhaps the "kindest cut of all," namely the preliminary snack he allows the table-waiters. He is well aware that table-service at the end of a long fast day can be extremely burdensome since the waiters eat last of all and they eat the leftovers. Still, Pachomius, *reg.* 74, demands they wait till the rest are done eating. In RM 23.40, they are permitted to eat along with the community, but anyone who has tried that realizes how impractical it is. Finally, Caesarius of Arles offers the cooks a drink of

some sort before the meal (*reg. virg.* 14). So Benedict is writing at the end of a fairly long trajectory.

In his famous edition of RB, Cuthbert Butler, 72, notes that RB 35.12-14 seems to be based on a saying of Augustine's *reg. serv.* 13.160-162: "Let them serve the brothers without murmuring." Vogüé, 6.1024, thinks that Benedict has seen the text of his contemporary, Caesarius, for he shares the words *singulas* and *labore*. Since the saying on murmuring (v. 13) seems to be the centerpiece of this section, this is what needs emphasis (Böckmann, 10.284).

The prevention of grumbling, of course, is something that Benedict often alludes to (see notes 34.6 and 41.5). He dislikes grumbling because it undermines the morale of the community and disturbs the communal peace. But he is realistic enough to know that morale is not maintained by mere words. If people are laboring under unjust conditions they have a right and even a duty to complain; if they do not, things will never improve, a principle which might be called the motto of the labor movement in our century. At any rate, Benedict cannot be accused of insensitivity. He takes care of his workers, who are his brothers.

3. Prayers for the Servers

As in the profession ceremony (58.21), Benedict has the outgoing and incoming servers pray in the oratory with the whole community. This is done in triplicate, with the monks repeating a verse enunciated by the server. It is interesting to see that Benedict has replaced the verses proposed by the Master (19.3 and 25.6) which both express fear of the devil. This is typical of the Master and Benedict (see Kardong, 11.41-62 and 10.3-11).

Rather than concentrate on the words of the prayer, however, it seems more important to note the whole context of the prayer. We are not surprised to learn that all the monks gather to pray for a newcomer at profession. It is less expected to find them praying fervently for the kitchen servers. What could be humbler and less extraordinary than this work? Yet Cassian has a special blessing for the servers in the dormitory (*inst.* 4.17-19) and Benedict moves it into the oratory. This, along with the Sunday ritual of the foot-washing, indicates that kitchen service was inextricably bound together with religion in the minds of these early monks. More specifically, it was seen as both a concrete and symbolic following of Jesus himself, who not only ate with sinners and served at table, but gave his very life for the human community. See note 35.9.

XXXVI: DE INFIRMIS FRATRIBUS

[1]Infirmorum cura ante omnia et super omnia adhibenda est, ut sicut revera Christo ita eis serviatur, [2]quia ipse dixit: *Infirmus fui et visitastis me,* [3]et: *Quod fecistis uni de his minimis mihi fecistis.* [4]Sed et ipsi infirmi considerent in honorem Dei sibi servire, et non superfluitate sua contristent fratres suos servientes sibi; [5]qui tamen patienter portandi sunt, quia de talibus copiosior merces acquiritur. [6]Ergo cura maxima sit abbati ne aliquam neglegentiam patiantur.

[7]Quibus fratribus infirmis sit cella super se deputata et servitor timens Deum et diligens ac sollicitus. [8]Balnearum usus infirmis quotiens expedit offeratur—sanis autem et maxime iuvenibus tardius concedatur. [9]Sed et carnium esus infirmis omnino debilibus pro reparatione concedatur; at, ubi meliorati fuerunt, a carnibus more solito omnes abstineant.

[10]Curam autem maximam habeat abbas ne a cellarariis aut a servitoribus neglegantur infirmi. Et ipsum respicit quicquid a discipulis delinquitur.

RB 36: THE SICK BROTHERS

1. The sick are to be cared for before and above all else, for it is really Christ who is served in them. 2. He himself said: *I was sick and you visited me,* and 3. *Whatever you did to one of these little ones, you did to me.* 4. For their part, the sick should keep in mind that they are being served out of respect for God. Therefore they should not irritate the brothers serving them with excessive demands. 5. Nonetheless, they should be treated with patience, for in doing so one merits a generous reward. 6. So the abbot must be very careful that they suffer no neglect whatever.

7. The sick brothers should be provided with a separate room and a server who is God-fearing, devoted and careful. 8. The sick should be granted the use of baths as often as it seems useful, but they should be allowed less readily to the healthy, and especially to the young. 9. The eating of meat should be allowed to the very weak to build up their strength. When they have recuperated, however, all must abstain from meat in the accustomed manner.

10. The abbot should be extremely careful that the sick not be neglected either by the cellarers or the servers. He is responsible for whatever faults the disciples commit.

RB 36 Notes

T

sick (infirmis). The Latin term can mean either "weak" or "sick." In this chapter it means mostly the latter, but elsewhere in RB it is less connected with physical illness. In fact, Benedict uses the term frequently, which indicates that he is concerned and compassionate toward human weakness. The Master uses the word *aegrotus* in reference to physical illness (RM 69) and he maintains an extremely suspicious attitude toward those who claim to be sick. See *Index:* Weakness.

1.

sick (infirmorum) is the first word in the Latin sentence, thus reinforcing the claim that the care of the sick is to come first. It is also the first item in the list of persons that the cellarer is to care for (31.9).

before and above all else (ante omnia et super omnia). M. Puzicha points out that both Basil and Augustine tend to use this expression when describing love. It is, of course, the greatest commandment and it is the root meaning of all Christian service.

really (revera) indicates that the logic at work is that of Matthew 25, namely that when one extends loving care to the little ones, one is in fact really serving Christ. This will immediately become clear when Matthew 25:36 and 40 are quoted. The same argument is employed in RB 53 concerning the stranger. Basil, *reg.* 36, also demands that the sick be served as Christ.

served (serviatur) is a strong tie with the previous chapter on the kitchen servers. *Servire* is the main theme running through this chapter, appearing no less than five times: 36.1,4(bis),7,10. The ultimate reference is Christ himself, who came to "serve, not to be served" (Matt 20:28), but who also is served in the needy. In Latin, *servire* means both "serve" and "save," which is obvious in the case of Christ, but it can also be a reminder that the corporal works of mercy are not just humanitarianism. See *Index:* Service.

3.

little ones (minimis). Some scholars now believe that "little ones" in NT parlance may be a code word for the Christians (thus, Harrington, 357). While that may be disappointing to the modern universalist mentality, it does not affect Benedict's usage of the verse, for he is thinking only of sick members of the monastery. Still, the same verse seems to have inspired Basil to found a public hospital run by his monks (*reg. parv.* 155,160) and modern Benedictine hospitals are also inspired by this chapter of the Holy Rule.

4.

respect (honorem). Benedict sometimes uses *honor* in the sense of religious worship and devotion, but the term cannot be understood apart from its rootage in Mediterranean culture. Deep in the psyche of these people is the notion that all encounters either increase or decrease one's personal or family honor. Even on the sickbed this game may not cease, so Benedict must warn the patient not to fall into it. See B. Malina and J. Neyrey, 25–65; Kardong, 23.200-201; see *Index:* Honor.

Although this warning to the sick accords with common sense, it is not exactly in the spirit of Matthew 25 where no qualifications are made. From the standpoint of Jesus' radical ethic, it makes no difference whether the sick are well-behaved or not. One must take care of them. Nevertheless, Benedict lectures the sick much less than Basil, *reg.* 36, or RM 69, which is positively hostile toward them.

irritate (contristent). Since Benedict puts an extremely high premium on good will ("God loves a cheerful giver," 5.16), he is equally harsh toward anything or anyone who causes pain in others. Just as in the previous chapter (35.12-14), he is solicitous of those who must serve the community, realizing that good morale is an essential ingredient of good service. No doubt he realizes, though, that the sick often are unaware of the hardship they are causing the nurses. In *reg.* 37, Basil makes a point that Benedict does not transmit, namely, that the sick monk should accept the service of the brothers. If he does not, he will be risking the same divine displeasure as Peter did in John 13. Because of the ascetical mentality that characterizes many monks, they may find it quite hard to accept health care. Also at stake here is the theological principle that salvation is something that can only be accepted in gratitude and not won for oneself. See *Index:* Grace.

brothers (fratres). Beyond the theological considerations presented in RB 36, there is also the human element: the nurses are not simply hired help but brothers to the patient. This means the relationship should be personal and not just professional. It is also the reason why many monasteries go to great lengths to maintain an infirmary where they can take care of their own. See *Index:* Brother.

5.

patience (patientia) is one of the key concepts of the RB, and it turns up in many of the most important sections of the document. The notion of bearing one another's burdens out of patience is repeated in the unforgettable aphorism of RB 72.5. This is the overarching principle of RB 36: The healthy must help bear the burden of the sick. See *Index:* Patience.

reward (mercis). Probably the modern reader finds this verse disappointing, since "reward" seems like an unworthy motive for serving the sick. For Benedict, of course, it is a heavenly reward, and he is not the least bit embarrassed about it. In fact, Jesus promises a heavenly reward for faith and right living (e.g., Matt 5:3). Borias, 19.49-50, notes that RB 35.2 added the word "love" to "reward." No doubt that same idea is implied here as well. See *Index:* Merit.

6.

abbot (abbati). This verse shows that Benedict stands squarely within the cenobitic tradition that considers the superior as responsible for the material as well as the spiritual realm. Thus the abbot is a physical "doctor" as well as a spiritual physician (Holzherr, 209).

very careful (maxima cura) and "whatever" (aliquam) serve to underline the message. In RM 28.17, the abbot is told to be very careful that the sick monk is not malingering, a saying which epitomizes the difference between these two authors as well as anything could. The repetition of *cura* serves to create an inclusion with 36.1, and *cura* plus "no negligence" is repeated in v. 10, binding the chapter together with a double inclusion. The notion of service is repeated in vv. 1,6-7 and 10 (Borias, 10.287-289). See *Index:* Care.

7.

separate room (cella super se) is an idiomatic expression implying the word "built" or "partitioned." It is also used in 53.16 for the guest department. At this point RB 36 becomes less idealistic and more concerned with practical details.

God-fearing (timens Deum). To our minds, it might seem that the first qualification of the infirmarian should be special medical training, but hardly anyone had such an education in the early Middle Ages. To Benedict, the spiritual consideration is primary: The one who cares for the sick must be acutely aware of the presence of God (Christ, vv. 1-3) in the patient. Indeed, God must be reverenced in the least attractive members of the community, who are likely to be neglected if merely human standards are all that prevail. Other officials who are to be especially God-fearing are the cellarer (31.2) and the guest-director (53.21) See Kardong, 4.85 and 12.41. See *Index:* Fear.

devoted (diligens) is a form of "love" (diligo). Even though the word has lost much of its emotional freight in this form, it still implies a personal interest in the object of one's concern.

server (servitor). Although later Benedictine monasteries called their nurse "infirmarian," Benedict uses the generic word *servitor*. He also

uses this term for the kitchen-servers in 38.11. Since "servant" is a name of Christ (see Phil 2:7; Matt 12:18), we can say that serving the sick is a Christ-function. Therefore, Christ is serving Christ in RB 36. Even though Benedict does not use a specialized term for the nurse, he seems to make this a long-term appointment. See *Index:* Christ, Service.

8.

less readily (tardius) is obviously a relative term. If the sick have unlimited use of baths, then some restrictions apply to others. Bathing customs have fluctuated greatly throughout history, with some societies such as the Romans bathing daily, and other groups, such as the medievals, much less. Added to that was the weight of monastic tradition prior to Benedict, which was not favorably inclined to bathing. See Kardong, 28.35-38.

the eating of meat (carnium esus). Although it may seem like a surprising jump from bathing to the eating of meat, in fact the two things were associated in the ancient mind. In both cases, it was thought that the flesh was stimulated and even inflamed. Therefore ascetics throughout the Greco-Roman world avoided both things. See Jerome, *ep.* 79.6.

the very weak (infirmis omnino debilibus). Whether Benedict really means people at death's door or not, he uses very strong language here. Perhaps he already knew about monastic infirmaries where monks spent time being bled and then were granted the use of meat. That was certainly the custom in the Middle Ages (see Horn and Born, 2.175-188), but it does not seem to have been what Benedict had in mind. Caesarius of Arles has similar legislation about meat-eating in his *reg. virg.* 71. Many mss have the word *et* (and) before *debilibus,* which is much less rigorous teaching: the sick and the weak should be allowed meat. The same variant appears in 39.11, but in both cases it is very likely an interpolation (Lentini, 336).

allowed (concedatur). The Salzburg translation, 165, has "the very ill should eat meat," but that is not what the text says. Nevertheless, one can see their point, for the very ill were most likely encouraged to eat meat. A powerful story in the Life of Pachomius (*vit. Pach.;* Veilleux, 1.70-71) records how Pachomius himself refused meat in the infirmary when he saw the servers denying it to a very ill brother.

When they have recuperated (ubi meliorati fuerunt). Despite his tenderness toward the sick, Benedict remains a hardheaded realist. He understands that the human body quickly becomes accustomed to luxuries and soon finds them indispensable.

10.

He is responsible (Et ipsum respicit). Lentini, 337, notes that Benedict is not here setting down a general maxim but one pertaining to health care only. Nevertheless, passages such as RB 2.37-40 (see notes there) make the abbot responsible for whatever the monks in his charge do, good or bad. Still, common sense and Christian doctrine never assign total blame for a person's life or actions to another person. Probably Benedict means that the abbot is responsible for the overall good order and care of the sick, rather than isolated instances of negligence on the part of the personnel.

cellarers (cellarariis). No doubt the cellarer was responsible for obtaining the supplies needed for the infirmary. RB 31.9, where the cellarer is told to take good care of the sick, may witness to an earlier stage of Benedict's community when there were fewer officials (Borias, 19.49-50).

disciples (discipulis). This is the only occurrence of this term after RB 6. The term appears only in the first part of the Rule and it implies a master-disciple relationship based on the Rule of the Master. That idea is not very compatible with Benedict's type of cenobitism, nor is it clear why the term should turn up in RB 36. See *Index:* Disciple.

According to Borias, 17.53-54, RB 36.10b was added by a later author to tie the chapter up into a neat package framed by the ideas of "care" and "service." Without this ending, it ends with two addenda on bathing and meat-eating. I would agree with Vogüé, however, that Benedict created the entire chapter, for additions to a document rarely serve to unify it, as 36.10b surely does.

RB 36 Overview

A. The Chapter as a Whole

Although RB 36 on the sick brothers is only ten verses in length, it is a rather complete and satisfying composition. In his magisterial survey of the monastic tradition on the care of the sick, A. de Vogüé, 6.1075-1109, shows that of all the early monastic Rules, Benedict's is probably the most complete on this subject. It is, for example, the only Rule that treats the subject in one chapter. But there are several other ways in which this chapter is an advance on what preceded it.

As regards literary form, the composition seems to be carefully executed. The chapter is framed by a double inclusion in which the main theme is repeated twice, at precisely the middle and then again at the

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As regards literary form, the composition seems to be carefully executed. The chapter is framed by a double inclusion in which the main theme is repeated twice, at precisely the middle and then again at the

end. Although it must be admitted that the second half of the unit (vv. 7-9) gives the impression of being an addition (see note 36.10), nevertheless the inclusion holds the material together. And certainly the theme of careful service to the sick on behalf of Christ is one of great theological depth and beauty.

While Benedict got the theme of serving Christ in the sick from Basil, *reg.* 36, he seems to have added significantly to it on his own. This is done by naming the one who cares for the sick *servitor* (servant: 36.7,10). Although Benedict does not explicitly say this is a title of Christ, anyone sensitive to New Testament Christology will fill out the paradigm: Christ serves Christ in the sick. See notes 36.1 and 7.

Benedict's chapter on the sick is also an advance on the practical level of institutional development. Perhaps for the first time in cenobitic history, he arranges for a separate room for the sick and also a special attendant for their needs. Of course, his infirmary is still quite primitive as compared to the highly developed infirmaries of the Middle Ages (see Horn and Born, 2.175-188). Nevertheless, Benedict remains as one of the pioneers of careful and serious health care, which has reached its apogee in our own time.

B. The Chapter in the Trajectory of the Monastic Tradition

1. The Sick: RB 36.1-6

As we have noted, Benedict is by no means the first monastic writer to arrange for the care of the sick. Benedict seems to have picked up two points from Basil, *reg.* 36: first, he also quotes Matthew 25:36 and 40, which provides him with an invaluable biblical core for his teaching; second, he warns the sick not to burden the nurses with their demands. Nevertheless, this lecture to the sick is much less prominent in RB 36 than it is in Basil. Benedict simply does not let it dominate his treatment as happens with Basil. When we turn to the Rule of the Master, which is the chief source for much of Benedict's Rule, we find very little on the care of the sick, and what there is, is an embarrassment. In RM 69, the Master reveals an almost pathological distrust and even hatred for the sick. For him, sick people are mostly malingerers and frauds to be unmasked and forced back to work through various clever means. In RM 70, the monks are advised to visit the sick—in order to impress the abbot with their patent charity. To his great credit, Benedict has carefully avoided these disgraceful chapters of the Master. See Kardong, 28.32.

Probably one of the most successful monastic approaches to sick care is that of Augustine of Hippo. His brief remarks in *reg. serv.* reveal a balance and compassion. The Master could have learned from

Augustine and Benedict probably did learn from him, although there is no linguistic proof that he did (*RB 1980* does not list Augustine as an influence on RB 36). Far from distrusting or lecturing the sick, Augustine says that when they complain of a hidden malady, they must be believed (*pr*. 5.6). If the superior remains in doubt about the matter, he should then consult a doctor for an opinion. While this may strike us as only reasonable, it indicates a state of affairs when there were still reasonably skilled medical practitioners available, at least in a city like Hippo. For later centuries, and especially in rural areas, there simply were no trained doctors. See Kardong, 28.33.

When we situate Benedict against this backdrop of monastic opinion, he comes through as essentially positive and moderate regarding the sick. What is notably lacking in RB 36 is the suspicion that makes the Master sound so mean-spirited. Yet Benedict is realistic enough to know that the sick are still sinners and capable of considerable harm to the community. Yet unlike Basil he does not think this is the primary concern: what is much more crucial is to care for Christ in the sick whether they are worthy or not. See note 36.4.

2. The Servant of the Sick: RB 36.7

Regarding the monks assigned to care of the sick, the tradition starts already with Pachomius in southern Egypt. In *pr.* 40-42, he arranges for a weekly rotation of persons in charge of the sick. These nurses must have access to medical supplies and to the kitchen, so there is the potential for abuse against which the text warns. Pachomius sets aside special quarters for the sick, but the very fact of weekly rotation guarantees that sick care in this monastic system must have been primitive in the extreme.

As we have seen, Augustine lived in a more sophisticated society where doctors were available. He also arranges for a permanent monastic nurse in *reg. serv.* 5.8, or at least it seems that way from his brief remarks. It is interesting to see how one of Augustine's followers at the time of Benedict makes the same arrangement for a special infirmary and nurse. But Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 30, cannot resist the temptation to warn the nurse not to abuse her privileged access to special food and medicine.

On his part, Benedict avoids hectoring the nurses and risking damage to their morale. As we have seen, he creates a separate sickroom with its own attendant (36.7). Moreover, he wants this monk to be "God-fearing, devoted and careful," which probably refers back to the need to see Christ in the sick one. But the most notable contribution of Benedict to the office of sick care is the title "servant" *(servitor).*

Because we automatically use terms like "doctor" and "nurse," we may find it odd that none of the ancient Rules actually gives the health worker a title (see J. M. Clément). Modern monasteries call their nurse "infirmarian," but Benedict calls him "servant." As we mentioned in Part 1, this is a Christ-title and should be understood against the biblical theme of Christ as servant. See *Index:* Service.

3. Bathing and the Sick

Benedict confines himself to general humanitarian and theological concerns in the first half of RB 36, but in the second half he takes up concrete details such as bathing and the eating of flesh meat. We will discuss the second point in RB 39, where it is taken up again. At this point we will briefly survey the ancient monastic tradition on the use of baths.

When we read the famous *Life of Antony* (esp. *vit. Ant.* 47), it might seem that the earliest Egyptian monks did not bathe at all. The author (Archbishop Athanasius) has an obvious fear and aversion of nudity and bathing. To understand this attitude, it is necessary to know that bathing was one of the chief pastimes of sophisticated Greeks and Romans. The great and splendid public baths were gathering places for thousands of the citizens of the urban centers such as Alexandria. Since much of the time spent there was without clothing, it is not surprising that the baths were an affront to Christian moral standards. Hence it is not at all unexpected to find the early monks rejecting this symbol of civilized decadence.

The early monastic hostility to nude bathing is even more evident in the Pachomian Rule (*pr.* 92-95). Here it is clear that the danger to be avoided is homosexuality, which was very common in pagan society and which constituted a serious problem for the Pachomian movement (see *Bohairic Life* 18, Veilleux, 1.152; also discussed in Ruppert, 181). With our modern Western obsession with hygiene, we cannot comprehend the monastic aversion to bathing, but they could hardly have understood our casual attitude toward sexual morality.

St. Augustine does not have a good reputation when it comes to his views of the body and sexuality, but the surprising thing is that he is relatively broad-minded about bathing. In *reg. serv.* 5.5 he not only permits (as does Benedict in RB 36.8) the sick to take baths, but he commands them to do so when the doctor orders it. *Pr.* 5.7 requires that the monks go to the baths in twos or threes, and not with whom they wish but with whom they are sent. He is thinking, of course, of the public baths in a big Roman town like Hippo. Augustine's Gallic disciple, Caesarius of Arles, makes more or less the same arrangements for bathing (*reg. virg.* 29) with perhaps a less tolerant spirit.

Seen in this trajectory, Benedict does not come across as particularly rigorous on the question of bathing. Although there are no verbal clues to that effect, he seems to be in the same spirit as Augustine. Probably, though, there were no public baths in the rural area in which Benedict lived. The charged atmosphere of the Pachomian strictures versus homosexuality are nowhere in sight in RB 36. Certainly Benedict does not share the almost fanatical spirit of Benedict of Aniane, who attempted to ban bathing and bathtubs altogether from Carolingian monasteries (see Horn and Born, 1.22).

Rather than end on a frivolous note, let us repeat that Benedict has produced a very successful little chapter on the care of the sick. When one sees all the possible pitfalls into which an ancient monastic writer could fall on this topic, it is noteworthy that Benedict has steered a safe course. His treatise is theologically rich, humanly compassionate and quite devoid of axe-grinding.

XXXVII: DE SENIBUS VEL INFANTIBUS

[1]Licet ipsa natura humana trahatur ad misericordiam in his aetatibus, senum videlicet et infantum, tamen et regulae auctoritas eis prospiciat. [2]Consideretur semper in eis imbecillitas et ullatenus eis districtio regulae teneatur in alimentis, [3]sed sit in eis pia consideratio et praeveniant horas canonicas.

RB 37: THE AGED AND CHILDREN

1. While human nature itself is indulgent toward these two groups, namely the aged and children, the authority of the Rule should also look out for them. 2. Their weakness must always be kept in mind and the strictness of the Rule regarding food should not be imposed on them. 3. Rather, let them be treated with loving consideration: they should (eat) before the regular time.

RB 37 Notes

T

RM 28.19-26 treats of the same subject, except that it discusses children first. In fact, the Master spends most of this paragraph speaking of children, and only mentions the aged in the last sentence. What is more, the Master spells out his mitigations for children in great detail, and specifies that he is speaking of those under the age of twelve years. Thus

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Benedict has greatly simplified the material, while still enriching it with a spirit of great sympathy and tenderness. Because of their weakness, the aged and children share much in common with the sick. Thus the connection with the preceding chapter is evident (Lentini, 338).

children (infantibus). The Roman terms for childhood were notoriously vague and variable (see note 30T). Generally speaking, an *infans* was someone under legal age, but that still allowed for a lot of difference. Thus RM 28.24 sets twelve years as the minimum age for fasting, but fifteen years as the minimum age for excommunication (RM 14.78; see *RB 1980,* 235). See *Index:* Child.

RB 30 is also about children, and like RB 37 it also is a section of RM that Benedict has developed into a separate chapter. This may indicate his special concern for children.

1.

While . . . for them (Licet . . . prospiciat). This elaborate sentence resembles several of the opening sentences of the papal letters of Gregory the Great (Vogüé, 6.1111). To judge from the argument of this verse, Benedict does not wish to leave this delicate matter simply to the natural good will of the community. He means to provide a solid juridical foundation for tenderness (Lentini, 338). The same train of thought is found in Basil, *reg.* 2, where it is argued that since human nature puts love of neighbor in our hearts, the Rule should bolster those bonds by its regulations (Holzherr, 210). G. Tinder argues just the opposite point: People are *not* naturally sympathetic to the sick and the weak; only the Christian ethic has instilled this in them; if Christianity ceases to be the main ethos of our culture, we can expect humanitarian care to decline.

2.

kept in mind (consideretur). The same idea is repeated negatively in the next verse. A similar stylistic device is employed in 35.3-4, where the discussion is also on the need to take human weakness into careful account (Vogüé, 2.537). *Considerare* is a favorite term of Benedict for sympathetic concern and treatment of those with special needs (see 48.25 and 53.19). The result of careful concern for the weak is *mercy* toward them. Borias, 12.56-67, concludes that the Master thinks of mercy primarily as God's condescension towards "miserable" humanity. For the Master, the superior is the main agent of that mercy, which is exercised through certain small gifts to the weak. Benedict, however, stresses the need for every monk to exercise mercy to his neighbor and especially through personal kindness and consideration. See *Index:* Mercy.

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weakness (imbecillitas) appears also in 48.24, where the abbot is instructed to avoid crushing the weak with excessive work. He must still, though, give them something useful to do. Likewise, in RB 37, the aged and the young are given certain dispensations, but they are not removed from the common life. To do so is demoralizing. See *Index:* Weakness.

They should eat before the regular time (et praeveniant horas canonicas). Although *horas canonicas* refers to the Divine Office in 67.3, the obvious sense of this passage seems to point to the time for meals. No doubt this little chapter was inserted in the section on meals (RB 35–41) because it pertains mainly to food. Benedict is not setting up a separate table for the old and the children, since he says in 63.18 that they should eat with the rest. Rather, he provides them with an early snack to tide them over to meal times, especially the late afternoon meals of fast days. RB 39.10 remarks that they should eat less at the regular meals. Consequently, the mitigation for the aged and children did not lie in more food but in smaller portions taken more often (Lentini, 339–340). Gindele, 3.129-135, thinks the children ate six hours before the single meal of fast days.

Jerome, *ep.* 22.35, says this about the Egyptian cenobites: "They give wine only to the aged; to them and also to the children they offer a second meal so that the aged may bear their weariness and the frailness of the young might not be broken" (quoted in Lentini, 340). Jerome, preface to the Pachomian Rule, 5, also notes their concern for the aged and the young.

Even though mitigations in regard to food were made to the aged and young, they were rarely given meat to eat. Only two ancient Rules, Theodore of Canterbury, *can.* 34 and Fructuosus *reg. com.* 2.8, allow them flesh meat. See Vogüé, 6.1113-1114.

XXXVIII: DE HEBDOMADARIO LECTORE

[1]Mensis fratrum lectio deesse non debet, nec fortuito casu qui arripuerit codicem legere ibi, sed lecturus tota hebdomada dominica ingrediatur. [2]Qui ingrediens post missas et communionem petat ab

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omnibus pro se orari, ut avertat ab ipso Deus spiritum elationis, [3]et dicatur hic versus in oratorio tertio ab omnibus, ipso tamen incipiente: *Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum adnuntiabit laudem tuam;* [4]et sic accepta benedictione ingrediatur ad legendum.

[5]Et summum fiat silentium, ut nullius mussitatio vel vox nisi solius legentis ibi audiatur. [6]Quae vero necessaria sunt comedentibus et bibentibus sic sibi vicissim ministrent fratres ut nullus indigeat petere aliquid; [7]si quid tamen opus fuerit, sonitu cuiuscumque signi potius petatur quam voce. [8]Nec praesumat ibi aliquis de ipsa lectione aut aliunde quicquam requirere, *ne detur occasio;* [9]nisi forte prior pro aedificatione voluerit aliquid breviter dicere.

[10]Frater autem lector hebdomadarius accipiat mixtum priusquam incipiat legere, propter communionem sanctam, et ne forte grave sit ei ieiunium sustinere. [11]Postea autem cum coquinae hebdomadariis et servitoribus reficiat.

[12]Fratres autem non per ordinem legant aut cantent, sed qui aedificant audientes.

RB 38: THE WEEKLY READER

1. The meals of the brothers ought not to lack reading, nor should just anyone who happens to pick up the book read there. Rather, the one who is to read should begin on Sunday and do so for the whole week. 2. After Mass and Communion, the one beginning the week should petition all to pray for him, that God might protect him from the spirit of pride. 3. And let all recite this verse three times in the oratory, with the reader beginning it: *Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise*. 4. When he has received the blessing, let him begin the week of reading.

5. Profound silence should reign there, so that the only voice heard will be that of the reader and not of anyone else whispering or talking. 6. As they eat and drink, the brothers should serve the needs of one another so that no one need ask for anything. 7. If it is necessary, however, one should make his request by some audible signal rather than by voice. 8. No one should presume to ask questions about the reading or about anything else, *in case the devil be given an opening*. 9. The superior may wish, though, to make a brief remark for edification.

10. The brother who is the weekly reader should receive some doctored wine before he reads. This is because of the Holy Communion and because he may find it difficult to endure the fast. 11. He should eat with the weekly cooks and servers after the meal.

12. The brothers are not to read or sing in order, but only those who edify the listeners.

RB 38 Notes

1.

The meals . . . reading (Mensis fratrum lectio deesse non debet). As he often does, Benedict begins this chapter with an aphorism. Compared to the last two chapters (RB 36: Matt 25 on serving the sick; RB 37: the need to legislate human kindness), this particular dictum is rather dry and colorless: Monastic meals must always have reading. The Pachomian monks, for example, kept silence at table (*pr.* 33). Cassian says that the Cappadoccian monks had reading to prevent idle gossip (*inst.* 4.17). Basil, *reg. brev.* 180, provides a more theological reason for reading: the soul should be fed as well as the body. Augustine, *reg. serv.* 3.1-2, values table-reading both because it prevents quarrels and because it nourishes the soul. He explicitly mentions the Bible as the reading material (*reg. serv.* 3.2). As bishop, however, Augustine promoted inspirational conversation at table (Kardong, 19.173-175). Benedict, however, provides no theoretical background for this practice. He simply says it must not be omitted (see Lentini, 342). RM 24.4-5 provides a biblical basis for the practice of table-reading: "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). He comments: "At the carnal meal, spiritual food ought not to be lacking."

pick up (arripuerit). "Snatch up" would be even more accurate but sound exaggerated. Perhaps Benedict is implicitly criticizing Caesarius of Arles, who merely states: "At table, no one should speak, but someone should read from a book" (*reg. mon.* 9, quoted by Lentini, 343). What he wants to avoid is frivolous, unprepared reading. This was especially necessary with ancient codices, which were unpunctuated and difficult to use. In our own day when schools no longer teach public reading, it is again imperative that monastic table-readers prepare carefully for their task if they are not to torture their hearers.

the book (codicem). No doubt the Bible was part of the reading of every meal, but Augustine, *reg. serv.* 3.2, is the first monastic writer to mention it and Benedict must take it for granted. If only a page of it is read at two meals a day, a community can hear much of the Sacred Book in a year's time. RB 66.8 requires that the Rule itself be read each day, probably at table, but is very significant that Benedict drops the Master's insistence (RM 24.15-17; 26-27; 31-33) that the Rule be the main substance of table reading and even "divine food"! Most communities today read Church history, biography and other interesting and solid material. Since intricate and complex material puts a strain on the hearer who is eating, heavy theology and philosophy are usually avoided. Fortunate is the monastery that has a good system of

choosing books for the table-reading. Much depends on the suggestions of well-read and judicious members.

read (legere). The Latin is somewhat ambiguous and could be read: "Nor should it be someone who just happens to pick up the book to read" (Lentini, 344).

2.

after Mass and Communion (post missas et communionem) could also be translated "after the closing prayers (of Sext) and Communion." We know from the Rule of the Master (RM 21) that a daily Communion service was held. And it is also clear that *missas* can refer to the closing prayers of the Office (17.5) (Steidle, 3.102). The commentators are split on which is correct, and certainly either one is possible, but I have opted for Mass since the monks are almost sure to have had the Eucharist celebration on Sunday, whereas they probably did not during the week. See Vogüé, 25.161-172; Bhaldraithe, 1.378-440. See *Index: Missas*.

spirit of pride (spiritum elationis) is the opposite of humility, which is demanded of the table-reader in 47.4. No doubt the ability to read an ancient codex well in public was a hard-learned skill and demanded a good deal of intelligence. Before the age of electric amplification, a good voice was also essential. All of this could have induced pride in the reader. See *Index:* Pride.

3.

three times (tertio). In RM 24.11, the reader recites the verse once and the choir repeats it once.

with the reader beginning it (ipso tamen incipiente). In modern Benedictine practice, RB 38.3 is interpreted to mean that the reader recites the verse thrice and the choir repeats it each time. The verse could be interpreted, however, to mean that the reader intones the first few words of the verse and the choir finishes it.

Lord, open my lips (Domine, labia mea aperies). Psalm 50:17 is also used as the opening of Vigils during the winter (9.1). Since the monks have observed the night silence up to that time, the verse seems more fitting for the Office. In any case, it does not jibe with the wish for humility in 38.2 (Vogüé, 2.574). The same triple invocation is used for the kitchen servers in 35.16-18 and for the profession of promises in 58.20-21.

in the oratory (in oratorio). The Master has the blessing of the reader and servers in the refectory itself (24.8). In traditional Benedictine practice, the reader is also blessed in the refectory before each meal. Lentini, 345, calls this "a most ancient practice."

4.

begin the week of reading (ingrediatur ad legendum). Literally, "let him begin to read," but it seems obvious that the reference is to the whole week ahead, especially since the blessing does not take place in the refectory.

blessing (benedictione). RM 24.12-13 implies that the abbot gives the blessing and that is taken for granted here as well.

5.

whispering (mussitatio) is an onomatopoetic word, resembling the buzzing of bees (OLD). There is no connotation here of "murmuring" or complaining, but simply of talking in a subdued voice. Even that can be disturbing to someone who is trying to listen to the reading. Since there is a certain amount of inevitable noise involved with the serving and eating of a meal, the addition of even subdued talking could seriously disrupt the table-reading (Lentini, 345–346).

Profound silence (Summum . . . silentium) was also the custom in Egypt, where there was no tradition of table-reading (see *hist. mon.* 3; Cassian, *inst.* 4.17). Such a silence would help to create a quasi-religious atmosphere such as Benedict wishes in the refectory. Although he never presents silence as the optimal atmosphere in which to receive the word of God, that is an important dimension of this question. See *Index:* Silence.

6.

serve (ministrent). Those at table are urged to watch out for the needs of the others dining with them. While RB 35 seems to provide servers at table, it could be that it is really talking about the cooks. Although the operative word in RB 35 is *servire* and not *ministrare,* the principle is the same. The fine art of being aware of the needs of others at table is symbolic of a life lived in service to the needs of the community. See *Index:* Service. By contrast, Pachomius, *pr.* 30, forbids the monks at table to look at others (also described by Cassian, *inst.* 4.17). Apparently ascesis is uppermost in his mind, while charity is the prime concern of Benedict (Lentini, 346).

one another (vicissim). Because this word is used in connection with the rotation of appointed servers in 9.5 and 32.3, Vogüé, 6.1045, suspects this verse is really talking about table-waiters (6.1045). He also notes that *ministrent* has a counterpart in *ministerii* (35.10), a reference to the servers. I find both of these arguments unconvincing. See *Index:* Mutuality.

7.

some audible signal (sonitu cuiuscumque signi). It seems curious that

Benedict would call for an audible signal rather than a merely visible sign since his purpose is to preserve the silence. On this point, he may be following the literary tradition of Cassian and Pachomius more than the practical needs of the situation. In RM 9.25-26, the monk must beat on the table with his knife or spoon or bread (!) if he wishes to speak. In traditional monastic practice, simple hand-signs at table have always been in use and easily understood.

8.

no one presume to ask (nec praesumat . . . aliquis . . . requirere) stands in sharp contrast to RM 24.19, which seems to view the monastic meal as a sort of symposium at which the abbot answers the questions of the monks concerning the reading (see also *reg. iv patr.* 2.42 and *reg. ii patr.* 46). In the next verse, Benedict allows a *brief* remark by the superior, but that is all. In RB, the verb *praesumere* usually signals a conflict with authority (see *Index:* Presumption), but here it may denote Benedict's decisive rejection of the apparently chaotic meals in RM. One wonders if they do not offend his famous sense of order and calm. Another possibility is that Benedict imagines such questions could present a challenge to the abbot as teacher. Such a thing is possible in the Mediterranean "honor and shame" culture, where people are constantly challenging one another in such fashion. The example of Jesus and the Pharisees is illustrative in this regard. See B. Malina and J. Neyrey, 25–67.

the devil be given an opening (ne detur occasio). In fact, the devil is not mentioned here, but since Ephesians 4:27 does mention the Evil One, and Benedict uses the full text in 43.8 and 54.4, we assume it is implied here. It is hard to know exactly what lies behind this passage, except that Benedict is very suspicious of much talking, which he associates with sin in 6.4. See *RB 1980,* 236–237, and Kardong, 10.8. Lentini, 347, does not think that the occasion here is for the devil but simply for speaking.

9.

It may happen, though, that the superior (Nisi forte prior), literally, "Unless perhaps the superior," which presupposes the apodosis "No talking at table." See Vogüé, 2.575.

brief remark for edification (pro aedificatione . . . breviter dicere). It is plain that Benedict does not want the meal to become an occasion for long-winded discourses by the abbot or anyone else. For one thing, this would upstage the prominence of the word of God. But it would also contradict Benedict's notion of the abbot as an exemplar of virtue rather than a garrulous philosopher as in RM 8–9. In RM 24.26-37, the

atmosphere is more like a schoolroom, with the abbot acting like a schoolmaster quizzing the brothers on the text of the Rule, which is the regular reading at table. The charity inculcated by RB 38.5-7 creates a completely different atmosphere. Indeed, the Master's use of the common meal for indoctrination and harrassment goes completely against normal humanity and especially against the Christian understanding of the meal.

The superior may, though, wish (Nisi forte prior . . . voluerit). Lentini, 348, says that *forte* probably means "occasionally" in this verse.

superior (prior) is a broader term than abbot. Since the abbot was frequently absent from the common table so as to eat with the guests (RB 56), someone else would be in charge of the dining room (Lentini, 348).

10.

doctored wine (mixtum) is substituted for *merum* of RM 24.14, which means pure wine. The wine could be mixed with water, or it could be fortified with some food like bread.

because of the Holy Communion (propter sanctam communionem). The Master is quite graphic in his description of the problem: "so that the Sacrament will not be spit out." Benedict may also see the wine as a mouthwash for this purpose. If that is the case, then probably it is mixed with water. Nowhere does Benedict indicate that there was a Communion service every day as we find in RM 21–22, but there may have been. Or this verse may refer to Sunday, as in 38.2.

endure the fast (jejunium sustinere). If the reader did not get a drink before the meal, he would have to fast longer than the rest of the community. Given the considerable labor of reading without amplification to a large group, this is a hardship that Benedict does not wish to impose on the reader. As usual, he is careful not to make work for the community excessively burdensome. Otherwise, the reader would perhaps be driven to sadness (see *Index:* Sadness). From this standpoint, it would make things lighter if the reader had some wine and bread, just as the servers do in 35.12. When he uses the term "fast" *(jejunium),* Benedict probably means the evening meal on fast days, or at least the meal at mid-afternoon (Lentini, 349). See *Index:* Fast.

11.

servers (servitoribus) most likely refers to table-waiters, although Salzburg, 167, seems to think it means those who serve elsewhere. *RB 1980,* 237, wonders if these are sick-attendants, but then why would they need to eat at the second-table? In traditional monastic refectories, the reader and the servers eat the leftovers from the meal, which

may be practical but is not always a very aesthetically satisfying experience. See *Index:* Service.

12.

edify (aedificant) repeats an important theme from verse 9. A. Borias, 10.272-273, notes that Benedict is employing a favorite device here in which he adds a coda (vv. 10-11) to the main topic but ties it to the main body by means of an inclusion. A second purpose of inclusion, of course, is that it reiterates a topic of special emphasis. Manning, 106, points out that the other usages of *aedificare* in RB (42.3; 47.3 and 53.9) all are connected with hearing. He thinks that all of them warrant the strong translation "build up." Certainly, the purpose of excellent reading is not to increase the admiration of the hearers for the reader but to bolster their spiritual life in Christ. Moreover, 42.3 and 53.9 insist that the reading material be edifying (Vogüé, 6.1062). See *Index:* Edification.

in order (per ordinem) refers to the order of entry established in RB 63. Benedict is willing to break with that basic arrangement in order to insure that the public reading be truly useful to the hearers. While one might tolerate some lack of expertise in this matter in order to involve more of the members in the work, at a certain point inept reading becomes unintelligible and irritating. When this happens at table, there is real risk that the common morale will be undermined. While very few monks are to be exempted from kitchen service (35.6), it could happen that only a few are capable of public table-reading. See *Index:* Rank.

sing (cantent) might refer to the Choir Office in church, but Lentini, 351, suggests that it may also mean that there was chanting in the refectory. He notes that some Italian monasteries still have patristic homilies chanted on certain high feast days and some European monasteries still have *recto tono* readings at meals. RB 47.3 also demands competence from both cantors and readers.

RB 38 Overview

The question of table-reading should be kept in the context of the meal as a human institution, and also as a Christian symbol. From time immemorial, people have considered a common meal as a primary celebration of community, and this event is normally attended by conversation. Not only do we share physical food, but we also share our personal lives by revealing ourselves to one another in a meal setting. See Barbotin, 2.319-339.

The Bible is firmly situated in this ordinary understanding of the common meal. It describes God's promises for the fulfillment of Israel in terms of a great banquet (Isa 55) and of course it lays down careful

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regulations for the special religious meals of the Israelites (Exod 12). In the New Testament, Jesus himself shares in these meals and uses them as special occasions for illustrating the nature of the kingdom of God (e.g., Luke 14). Finally, he reveals his ultimate sacrament of the Eucharist at a meal (Mark 14:17-25). See Barbotin, 1.273-306.

What should be noted here is the fact that in none of these instances is the normal human practice of the meal disrupted: people not only share food, but they share conversation. But the early monks saw fit to eliminate conversation from their common meals. What was their purpose in doing so? Were they justified in repudiating this basic humane mode of living? These are some questions that should be kept in mind when studying Benedict's chapter on table-reading.

A. The Monastic Tradition

One of the frustrations in dealing with RB 38 is its lack of discussion as to the meaning of reading at table. The practice had been going on for centuries before Benedict, and most of the earlier Rules commented on the purpose for reading, but Benedict did not—except to say it must take place (38.1). We can establish a rough sketch of the earlier tradition, but it is still not easy to situate Benedict on this spectrum.

The earliest commentator on the monastic meal is Pachomius, *pr.* 31–33, who forbids any talking or even looking at another. He says nothing about table-reading, and we get the impression that his basic approach to the meal is ascetical or penitential. Cassian, *inst.* 4.17, confirms this impression of the monks of Tabennesi, and notes that the Cappadoccian monks also forbid table talk because it can lead to quarrels. In all of this, there is no doubt that the monastic tradition took a disciplinarian approach to meals. RB 39–40, on the quantity of food and drink, will raise questions of the same sort.

When we come to Augustine, however, we notice a real advance in the discussion. He arranges for table-reading for the monks, and he explains why: "Not only should your mouths eat food, but your ears should take in the word of God." Thus in one deft stroke, the African bishop lays down a theology of table-reading based on Luke 4:4: "One does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Clearly, both texts are speaking of the Bible, which was the main material of monastic table-reading.

A century later, the Rule of the Master has a long, detailed chapter (24) on the table-reader, and it quotes Luke 4:4 directly. But when we come to 24.26ff., we find that the table-reading consists of the Rule itself. If the Master had not claimed divine inspiration for his Rule in Prol 2, we might think there is some mistake here. But there is no mistake:

the Master has the Rule read over and over again at table. In fact, he repeats this regulation three times in RM 24 (15-17; 26-27; 31-33).

Not only is there reading at the meal in RM, there is a good deal of conversation. This is not freeform conversation, but a virtual seminar in which the disciples ask questions about the reading, and the abbot/master expatiates. What is more, the abbot is told to quiz the monks on what they have heard (RM 24.34-37). The Master cannot resist importing his overall didacticism (see RM 8–9) into the very dining room, where it is quite out of place. The atmosphere must have been tense at times and often rather frenetic. Worst of all, it is amazingly devoid of silence. Here we have come a long way from the ascetic table-silence of the Eastern monks.

B. Benedict's Chapter

St. Benedict has considerably abbreviated RM 24, causing Vogüé, 6.1067-1073, to express regrets. No doubt, we are fortunate to have the wealth of details that we find in RM 24, but it seems to me that Benedict's compression of the material is not as unsuccessful as Vogüé thinks. Admittedly, it would be good if Benedict had grounded his chapter on the silence needed to welcome the word of God. He does not even say that the Bible was read, but we must assume that it was (see note 38.1). Nevertheless, RB 38 adds something very valuable to the tradition of monastic meals and that is the element of charity.

Probably the most important innovation in this matter concerns the need for the monks at table to watch out for the needs of one another (see note 38.6). Pachomius forbade the monks to speak to each other or even look at each other when eating, *pr.* 30, and the other Rules certainly do not encourage communication. Neither does Benedict, but he wants monks to be aware of the needs of the neighbor at all times. In this way, an essentially charitable atmosphere is insured at table.

Another charitable element in RB 38 lies in the *mixtum* provided for the reader. We have seen (note 38.10) that the Master allows this for cultic purposes (to clean the palate of the Communion wine), and Benedict may also have this in mind. But the main purpose of the *mixtum* is to sustain the reader so that the fast will not become oppressive. As he so often does, Benedict wants to avoid unnecessarily burdening those who must carry out various functions in the monastery (see notes 31.17-19; 35.4,12; 53.18). His is a kind of practical charity that strives to preserve a humane moderation that will enable the monks to live a charitable and ascetical life together for a long duration, a lifetime.

A third form of practical charity mentioned in RB 38 is the edification of the community. We have seen that this theme is repeated in vv.

9 and 12, indicating that it is a high priority for the author. *Aedificare* literally means to "build up" but it can be taken in more than one sense. Modern spirituality has often thought of it in terms of pious or elevated sentiments in the individual, but it can also be understood communally. It is true that neither of the usages in RB 38 demand the latter interpretation. The words of the superior in 38.9 can be seen as mere "instruction" (*RB 1980,* 237) or information. And the requirement that the reader possess the elocutionary and interpretative skills to "edify" the hearers can easily be passed over. Yet it is possible to think of the common reading as an important factor in the continual construction and maintenance of the spirit and love of the community. The long-term effects of listening to certain kinds of reading should not be discounted (see notes for 38.9 and 12).

Finally, Benedict's instinct for order at meals can be seen as a form of charity. He does not want a haphazard situation where anyone might end up reading the book (see note 38.1), and neither does he want a noisy discussion of the subject matter (note 38.8-9). In other words, he wants a calm and dignified atmosphere at meals where upset and hubbub are kept to an absolute minimum. Anyone who grew up in a stable home where meals were a scene of disciplined charity, recognizes that order is necessary over the long haul if the common meal is to be a vehicle of love and commitment.

XXXIX: DE MENSURA CIBUS

[1]Sufficere credimus ad refectionem cotidianam tam sextae quam nonae, omnibus mensis, cocta duo pulmentaria, propter diversorum infirmitatibus, [2]ut forte qui ex illo non potuerit edere ex alio reficiatur. [3]Ergo duo pulmentaria cocta fratribus omnibus sufficiant et, si fuerit unde poma aut nascentia leguminum, addatur et tertium. [4]Panis libra una propensa sufficiat in die, sive una sit refectio sive prandii et cenae: [5]quod si cenaturi sunt, de eadem libra tertia pars a cellarario servetur reddenda cenandis.

[6]Quod si labor forte factus fuerit maior, in arbitrio et potestate abbatis erit, si expediat, aliquid augere, [7]remota prae omnibus crapula et ut numquam surripiat monacho indigeries, [8]quia nihil sic contrarium est omni christiano quomodo crapula, [9]sicut ait Dominus noster: *Videte ne graventur corda vestra crapula.*

[10]Pueris vero minori aetate non eadem servetur quantitas, sed minor quam maioribus, servata in omnibus parcitate.

[11]Carnium vero quadrupedum omnimodo ab omnibus abstineatur comestio, praeter omnino debiles aegrotos.

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RB 39: THE QUANTITY OF FOOD

1. We believe that two cooked dishes are enough for the daily meal, whether at noon or mid-afternoon, at all times of the year. This is done because of the weaknesses of various persons, 2. for one who cannot eat one dish may be able to eat the other. 3. Therefore two cooked dishes should be enough for all the brothers, and if fruit or fresh vegetables are available, a third may be added. 4. A generous pound weight of bread should be enough for the day, whether it be for a single meal or for dinner and supper. 5. If they are to eat supper that day, a third part of the pound weight should be set aside by the cellarer for the evening meal.

6. If it should happen that the work has become especially heavy, the abbot may judge that something should be added. He has the power to do so if it seems useful, 7. provided above all that gluttony be avoided and the monk never be surprised by indigestion. 8. For there is nothing as out of place in a Christian life as gluttony. 9. As Our Lord says: *See that your hearts not be loaded down with drunkenness.*

10. The same amount of food, however, should not be served to young children, but less than to adults. Frugality should be maintained in all cases. 11. With the exception of those weak from illness, all the members must refrain from eating the flesh of four-footed animals.

RB 39 Notes

T

Now that Benedict has legislated for all those responsible for providing and serving the meals (RB 31,35,38), he takes up the question of the food itself (Lentini, 352).

1.

We believe (credimus) gives the discussion a tone of diffidence and modesty. This impression is not mistaken, for in 40.2 Benedict explicitly states his uneasiness in setting norms in matters of food and drink. The reasons are the same in both cases: differences in human needs and capabilities.

daily meal (refectionem cotidianam) actually refers to the main meal on a day of no fast (see 24.5,6; 35.12,13; 38.11; 41.6,7; 48.13). It always refers to the main meal, and not the evening meal on a two-meal day, which is called *cena* (39.4; 41.4; 42.3). The noon meal in itself is called *prandium*. These terms still are in force in modern Italian. See Lentini, 352.

whether at noon or mid-afternoon (tam sextae quam nonae). This leaves out the Lenten evening meal, perhaps because it did not have two dishes.

at all times of the year (omnibus mensis). Most commentators read *mensis* as the ablative of *mensa* (table), but I follow Lentini, 353–354, who prefers to see it as a variant for *mensibus* (months). If it refers to "tables," it could mean the discrete tables in the main refectory, or it could refer to "second table" (cooks and waiters) and the abbot's table. But that would seem to be taken for granted, and a reference to each table in the dining room also seems superfluous. Lentini calls the problem of *omnibus mensis* "tormentatissima," an Italian word that is self-explanatory.

weaknesses (infirmitatibus). It is not so easy to capture the exact flavor of *infirmitas* in this case. It certainly isn't moral, nor does it necessarily refer to physical sickness or limitation. Benedict simply recognizes that not everyone can eat everything; therefore, it is only practical to provide some variety so that each one can at least find something they can eat. Given the ascetical tradition, he is not providing a varied diet just to stimulate the appetite. Monks eat to live; they don't live to eat. See *Index:* Weakness.

The first part of the verse is very similar to RM 26.1, but Benedict adds the motivation and the restriction. In matters of food, he is more severe than the Master (Vogüé, 2.577).

3.

should be enough (sufficiant) appears to be restrictive, but may instead be expansive. For this verse shows that Benedict does not mean that monks must choose one or the other cooked dish; they may eat from both. See *Index:* Enough.

fresh vegetables (nascentia leguminum), literally, tender young vegetables. The reference is to vegetables that can be eaten raw. No third cooked dish is intended.

are available (si fuerit unde) either means they are in season or are available locally. It was unthinkable in ancient times to transport perishables more than a few miles.

Verse 3 repeats much of the content of v. 1, and it then supplies the added detail from RM 26.1 concerning the third plate of fresh fruit and vegetables (Vogüé, 2.577). Borias, 10.280, notes that the repetition of *sufficere* in 39.1 and 3 underlines it as an important value for Benedict: people should get what they need and nothing more (see 34.1). He also thinks that the parallelism of *omnis mensis* and *omnibus fratribus* shows that the former means "all the tables." I do not find the argument convincing.

4.

A generous pound weight of bread (Panis libra una propensa) was

probably about a kilo (Steidle) and not twelve ounces *(RB 1980).* This is genuine bread, the staple of life and main food of rural people the world over. A grown man would need more than twelve ounces daily, especially if he was doing manual labor. Perhaps the stipulation that it be "generously weighed" *(propensa)* indicates that there were different ways to determine a pound; whatever standard was used, there should be a generous measure of bread for the monks. Hildemar (ed. Mittermüller, 437) says that *propensa* means "weighed." Horn and Born (2.255) think that it means weighed by the baker and not haphazardly divided. They also make much of Theodomar's letter to Charlemagne (ch. 4) saying that their loaves of four pounds are divided into four parts. The question still remains: how big a pound?

Cassian, *inst.* 4.14; *conf.* 2.19, says the Egyptian monks also ate a pound of bread per day. Basil, *reg.* 91, tells the monks not to seek after special food, but he also instructs the superior to look out for those with special needs. *Reg.* 94 says that those who are working especially hard need more food.

The monks of Monte Cassino still preserve a bronze "pound weight" of 1.055 kgs. (a "generous pound" to be sure) which they claim is an original relic of St. Benedict. According to the legend, this measure was taken to Rome when the monks fled there in A.D. 577, and returned in Carolingian times to Monte Cassino by Theodemar. Lentini, 356, (a monk of Monte Cassino) thinks that what was weighed was the uncooked dough, which was reduced to about 800 grams when the water was baked out of it. He admits that we simply do not know in modern equivalents how much bread each monk received per day.

dinner and supper (prandii et cenae). See note 39.1 for the terms for Roman and Italian meals.

eat supper . . . evening meal (cenaturi . . . cenandis). In both cases, Benedict uses the verb *cenare,* to sup. The first verb form is a future active participle, a rare form in the RB, and the second form is a gerundive. There is no essential difference in the meaning of the two words.

6.

It is interesting that the Master allows extra food on feast days (RM 26.11), while Benedict connects more food with more work. In fact, the Master does not permit the monks to do heavy field work (RM 86.23-27) because then they will not be able to fast as much as they should (see Kardong, 26.110). Probably Benedict's monks were poorer than those of the Master, so some field work was imperative (RB 48.7-9). Nevertheless, it would have been good if Benedict had made provision

for festal meals. It is one of those rare instances in which his spirit is not as broad as that of the Master. Yet most Benedictine abbeys have known how to go beyond their patron saint in this regard.

the abbot may judge that something should be added. He has the power to do so if it seems useful (in arbitrio et potestate abbatis erit, si expediat, aliquid augere). There is a good deal of redundancy here, not to mention grammatical disarray (Vogüé, 2.578), which I have tried to alleviate by breaking the material into two sentences.

gluttony (crapula). In the next sentence, *crapula* will also be used for gluttony (see Cassian, *conf.* 20.11), but the word was restricted to drunkenness in Classical Latin (see OLD).

and the monk never be surprised by indigestion (ut numquam surripiat monacho indigeries). In this colorful expression, indigestion is compared to a wily enemy that has crept up and pounced. Perhaps the monk is unprepared for its effects because he is not used to great feasts. Still, the monastic system of one or two meals a day must have prepared people for large meals.

Grammatically *ut* may introduce a result clause, but it is not clear what the main verb would be. "Drunkenness be avoided" is an ablative absolute, which cannot control another dependent clause. All in all, the grammar in 39.6-7 is freewheeling. Lentini, 357, says that it reminds him of Tacitus and the "popular and poetic" style.

8.

Throughout this section on food, Benedict inserts passages of explanation and motivation that are missing in his source, namely, the Rule of the Master (see 38.10; 39.1-2, etc.; Vogüé, 2.578).

Christian life (omni christiano). This is probably the only time in the Rule that Benedict compares the monastic life to that of the ordinary Christian. The argument is *a fortiori,* and of the same type as occurs in 18.24 and 40.6. In those two passages, however, the comparison is in the other direction: if the monks of old did X, let us *at least* do Y.

sic contrarium (so out of place). The approach is rhetorical rather than theological, for there are certainly far greater sins for a Christian than drunkenness. In this saying, Benedict reveals himself as somewhat of a puritan.

9.

loaded down (graventur). In its original context, Luke 21:34 warns against whatever might cause lack of vigilance. Here too in RB 39.9, drunkenness is not opposed so much as sensuality, but as a cause of

forgetfulness. This in turn is connected with the central Benedictine theme of mindfulness, which has to do with constant awareness of the presence of God (RB 7.10-14). See *Index:* Forgetting.

10.

young children (pueris). The parallel passage in RM 26.14 spells out the precise number of years: boys under twelve.

amount (quantitas). To judge from RB 37, Benedict understands that children need to eat more frequently. Thus the quantity at each meal will be less. Teenagers need to eat even more.

frugality (parcitas). Throughout this chapter, Benedict seems to worry about excess. In vv. 7-9, it is seen from the standpoint of the individual as drunkenness and gluttony; here it is seen more objectively as waste. It is not clear to me exactly how this clause relates to what precedes. *RB 1980* has "since in all matters frugality is the rule," which is certainly a legitimate rendering of the ablative absolute. But is this meant as the explanation of less food for children, or does it apply to both children and adults? I avoid the issue by making *servata in omnibus parcitate* into a separate sentence.

Lentini, 358–359, remarks that this sentence is one of the finest in the Rule, including as it does both tenderness toward the weak and the need for discipline for all monks.

11.

four-footed . . . animals (Carnium . . . quadrupetum). Benedict has already forbidden the eating of meat in 36.9, but here he restricts the prohibition somewhat by limiting it to four-footed animals. In positive terms, he thereby allows the eating of fowl. It should be remembered that in the ancient world, only the rich ate meat regularly, and Benedict's monks were hardly included in that category. The general theory that lay behind the avoidance of red meat was that it arouses the passions (see Musurillo, 1–64). In our own time, vegetarianism has made a comeback, but more among secular humanists than among Christian ascetics. See Cawley, 320–338. RM 53.26-27 reluctantly allows the community meat on great feast days. *Vit. patr. Jur.* 66, which is also from the sixth century, is closer to Benedict on this question than it is to the Master (Holzherr, 216).

Strictly taken, the verse should be translated: "The eating of four-footed animals should be withdrawn from all." This would make the matter one of institutional authority imposed on the individual, but few commentators eliminate the personal element.

With the exception of the very sick (praeter omnino debiles aegrotos), literally, "of the weak sick." Some mss have "weak *and* sick." During the Middle Ages, it was common practice for monks to go to the infirmary to be bled; during that time, it was also customary to eat meat. See note 36.8; see *Index:* Weakness.

XL: DE MENSURA POTUS

[1]*Unusquisque proprium habet donum ex Deo, alius sic, alius vero sic;* [2]et ideo cum aliqua scrupulositate a nobis mensura victus aliorum constituitur. [3]Tamen infirmorum contuentes imbecillitatem, credimus heminam vini per singulos sufficere per diem. [4]Quibus autem donat Deus tolerantiam abstinentiae, propriam se habituros mercedem sciant.

[5]Quod si aut loci necessitas vel labor aut ardor aestatis amplius poposcerit, in arbitrio prioris consistat, considerans in omnibus ne surrepat satietas aut ebrietas. [6]Licet legamus vinum omnino monachorum non esse, sed quia nostris temporibus id monachis persuaderi non potest, saltem vel hoc consentiamus ut non usque ad satietatem bibamus, sed parcius, [7]quia *vinum apostatare facit etiam sapientes.*

[8]Ubi autem necessitas loci exposcit ut nec suprascripta mensura inveniri possit, sed multo minus aut ex toto nihil, benedicant Deum qui ibi habitant et non murmurent. [9]Hoc ante omnia admonentes ut absque murmurationibus sint.

RB 40: THE QUANTITY OF DRINK

1. *Each person is endowed by God with a special gift, some this, some that*. 2. Therefore it is with some some uneasiness that we lay down rules for the consumption of others. 3. Nonetheless, keeping in view the weakness of the sick, we believe that an hemina of wine a day is sufficient for each one. 4. But those to whom God gives the strength to abstain from wine should know that they will have their own particular reward.

5. But if local circumstances or the workload or the heat of summer demand more, the superior has the power to grant it. But he should be constantly vigilant that excess and drunkenness do not creep in. 6. We read that wine is absolutely not for monks. But since monks in our day cannot be convinced of this, let us at least agree not to drink to excess, but sparingly. 7. *For wine makes even the wise go astray.*

8. When, though, local conditions are such that not even the amount mentioned above can be obtained, but much less or none at all, those

With the exception of the very sick (praeter omnino debiles aegrotos), literally, "of the weak sick." Some mss have "weak *and* sick." During the Middle Ages, it was common practice for monks to go to the infirmary to be bled; during that time, it was also customary to eat meat. See note 36.8; see *Index:* Weakness.

XL: DE MENSURA POTUS

[1]*Unusquisque proprium habet donum ex Deo, alius sic, alius vero sic;* [2]et ideo cum aliqua scrupulositate a nobis mensura victus aliorum constituitur. [3]Tamen infirmorum contuentes imbecillitatem, credimus heminam vini per singulos sufficere per diem. [4]Quibus autem donat Deus tolerantiam abstinentiae, propriam se habituros mercedem sciant.

[5]Quod si aut loci necessitas vel labor aut ardor aestatis amplius poposcerit, in arbitrio prioris consistat, considerans in omnibus ne surrepat satietas aut ebrietas. [6]Licet legamus vinum omnino monachorum non esse, sed quia nostris temporibus id monachis persuaderi non potest, saltem vel hoc consentiamus ut non usque ad satietatem bibamus, sed parcius, [7]quia *vinum apostatare facit etiam sapientes.*

[8]Ubi autem necessitas loci exposcit ut nec suprascripta mensura inveniri possit, sed multo minus aut ex toto nihil, benedicant Deum qui ibi habitant et non murmurent. [9]Hoc ante omnia admonentes ut absque murmurationibus sint.

RB 40: THE QUANTITY OF DRINK

1. *Each person is endowed by God with a special gift, some this, some that*. 2. Therefore it is with some some uneasiness that we lay down rules for the consumption of others. 3. Nonetheless, keeping in view the weakness of the sick, we believe that an hemina of wine a day is sufficient for each one. 4. But those to whom God gives the strength to abstain from wine should know that they will have their own particular reward.

5. But if local circumstances or the workload or the heat of summer demand more, the superior has the power to grant it. But he should be constantly vigilant that excess and drunkenness do not creep in. 6. We read that wine is absolutely not for monks. But since monks in our day cannot be convinced of this, let us at least agree not to drink to excess, but sparingly. 7. *For wine makes even the wise go astray.*

8. When, though, local conditions are such that not even the amount mentioned above can be obtained, but much less or none at all, those

who live there should bless God and not murmur. 9. Most of all we warn them to avoid murmuring.

RB 40 Notes

T

quantity (mensura) matches the title of RB 39. In fact, the spirit of the two chapters is identical, based as they are on a respect for individual endowment and the need for moderation.

1.

special gift (proprium . . . donum). In its original context in 1 Corinthians 7:7, the reference is to celibacy or marriage. While Benedict has applied the text to the question of abstinence or indulgence in wine, the principle is the same: God endows each person with different capabilities and proclivities. Benedict does not expect anyone to transcend their natural endowment to exercise heroic virtue—at least in regard to the matter of drink.

2.

uneasiness (scrupulositate). The Latin term has come over into English, and especially Catholic moral theology, with the narrowed meaning of excessive self-examination. The root meaning of *scrupeus* is "sharp or jagged" things (e.g., rocks) which give discomfort (OLD, s.v.). In this verse, the whole matter of legislating the food and drink of others causes hesitation in the author because he knows how human needs vary and how difficult it is to hold all to a single norm. One monastic legislator who understood this very well was Basil, who makes a very strong statement about the folly of the group laying down minute sumptuary rules (*reg.* 9, cited in Holzherr, 217).

This chapter is roughly parallel to RM 27, but the Master is not at all scrupulous about setting down rules for the consumption of his monks. RM 27 is an extremely long and detailed set of casuistic regulations for the drinks to be given to each monk. While it is true that the Master does allow for some leeway in the number of drinks (27.7-9), it is also obvious that he has no common sense in these matters. To judge from his reworking of this material, Benedict understands well the futility of constructing such a mass of detailed rules in a matter where individual needs will necessitate all sorts of exceptions.

3.

keeping in view the weakness of the sick (infirmorum contuentes imbecilitatem). It seems that "weakness" here refers to the need some have for more wine, which Benedict regards as a "sickness." One wonders

if this is a need for more liquid, or whether it is really a need for more alcohol. In wine-drinking countries, where people imbibe a mildly alcoholic beverage all day long, alcoholism is not as noticeable a problem as it is in countries where hard liquor is the norm. Grammatically speaking, we have translated this clause in a neutral sort of way, but it is also possible to make it causal (Steidle). If the latter is the case, then the *hemina* is granted *because* some are weak. See *Index:* Weakness.

hemina (hemina). As is the case with many of the ancient weights and measures, we do not know how much the *hemina* contained. The note in *RB 1980* indicates that the classical *hemina* was about half a pint, but that seems ridiculously small. It also mentions a larger popular measure called *mina,* which may have been about a quart (Steidle, 133) and seems more plausible.

In order to keep some perspective on this issue, it is necessary to place oneself within Mediterranean culture where wine is not a luxury or an extraordinary thing; it is one of the staples and necessities of life. It is usually mixed with water and drunk in vast quantities. Although we are now aware of the dangers of alcoholism, we also know that one needs to drink a lot of fluid in a hot climate to avoid dehydration. If wine is naturally attractive, then it serves its purpose of inducing people to drink sufficient liquid.

4.

reward (mercedem). This verse seems to allude to 1 Corinthians 3:8, which is in turn quoted by Cassian in *conf.* 24.2. Cassian uses it as an argument for *tolerantia,* which is also the subject of this verse in RB. See *Index:* Merit.

strength (tolerantia). In its root significance, *tolerantia* refers to the ability to "bear" *(tollere)* something hard. Our modern use of "tolerate" also has connotations of difficulty, but it normally implies a passive acceptance. Obviously, Benedict's term is anything but passive; it involves an act of the will and it is not at all a matter of allowing things to take the route of least resistance. Since this strength is explicitly labeled a "gift of God," it could just as well be called "grace" (Schmitz).

The same point is made in 34.3-4, where it is noted that it is a "weakness" to need more. This implies that it is a "strength" to need less, which is precisely the kind of truth that our consumerist system wishes to keep well hidden.

5.

As in the previous chapter, Benedict here provides for extra drink when the work is hard. RM 27.43-46 does so for festal occasions. Even

though the vocabulary has been carefully varied, the sentiment and even the grammar of this verse is remarkably parallel to 39.6-9.

local circumstances (loci necessitas). As he does elsewhere (see 55.1-2), Benedict shows that he is not interested in lofty ideals that ignore concrete particulars. He knows that a long-term monastic asceticism must be matched to the actual living conditions of the place. See *Index:* Necessity.

workload (labor). It is typical of Benedict to be careful about the morale of his workers. He understands that those who work hard must have adequate support if they are to perform their labors efficiently and cheerfully. If the monks hauling timber need an extra glass of wine to get them through the day, then one should not begrudge it to them. See *Index:* Sadness.

6.

we read (legamus). The citation that follows is from *vit. patr.* 5.4,31, which had been translated into Latin shortly before Benedict's time. As he does in 18.24, Benedict invokes the example of the Egyptian hermits for a monastic standard far higher than anything practiced in the West in the sixth century. Yet it is only fair to point out that other sayings in the random collections from Egypt indicate that some of the monks did in fact drink wine (*vit. patr.* 5.4.26,36). Holzherr, 379, lists the following texts that speak of certain monks not drinking wine: *vit. patr. Jur.* 66; *vit. Ant.* 6; *vit. Pach.* 6; Cassian, *inst.* 5.6. One wonders why their example was mentioned at all if it was not seen as exceptional?

When evaluating this theme of the decline from the Golden Age, it seems that at least two options exist: (1) Benedict is genuinely mortified by the low observance of his contemporaries. (2) He uses a mythical Golden Age to good-naturedly prod his contemporaries to raise their standards. I would prefer to think that someone who could write a Rule that is so flexible and so closely attuned to human capabilities would not lack a sense of humor. Therefore, it is possible that verses like this are to be taken in the same sense.

It should also be remembered that the asceticism of the cenobite is not based on striving for ever greater austerities, but on cheerful acceptance of the common issue, whether it be of food or drink or anything else. This does not preclude personal fasting norms that go beyond the ordinary, but it merely states the principle that the asceticism of the common life is the life itself.

not to drink to excess (ut non usque ad satietatem) is quoted literally from Basil, *reg.* 9. *Reg.* 91 and 94 were alluded to in RB 39.3,7. See *Index:* Enough.

In terms of grammar, verse 6 has the same rough-and-ready quality as 39.6-9: a rather wild congeries of forms, some of which are of a distinctly unclassical nature. "We read that wine is not for monks" is actually a concessive clause, which is followed in turn by a causal clause. Moreover, several of the adverbs and particles are used in an anomalous way. See Lentini, 365.

7.

For wine makes even the wise go astray (Quia vinum apostatare facit etiam sapientes). The original text of Sirach 19:2 reads: "Wine and women make the mind giddy." "Women" has been deleted and "wise" added to make the text more appropriate to Benedict's purpose. The verb *apostatare* is not to be taken in the strong sense of "go astray from God." In general, the Hebrew Bible is not puritanical and nowhere preaches total abstinence from wine-drinking.

8.

When, though, local conditions are such (Ubi autem necessitas loci exposcit) is almost identical to the opening of v. 5, and it opens a new subject: local scarcity. Now the issue is not self-imposed asceticism but the more difficult asceticism imposed by conditions not of our choosing. The references to varying local conditions here and in 55.1 are clues that Benedict was not only writing for his own community but for a wider audience. While at first glance it may seem that Benedict is talking about a bad grape harvest, he may also be referring to the poverty of the community (see 48.7-9). In RM 27.47-51, the Master speaks of abstinence in order to have more alms for the poor; Benedict's monks may have been personally poorer than those of the Master (see note 4.14). Yet even the poorest of the poor in the Mediterranean region still drink wine, even though it be the sour *aceto* of the later pressings. One gets the impression that modern Italians would do more than murmur at lack of wine; they would revolt. See *Index:* Necessity.

murmur (murmurent). In this case, grumbling is symbolic of an unwillingness to endure the ordinary hardships of life, or at least the lot of the poor. No doubt the rich can always import wine, but the rural poor have to make do with what the land can produce. Here we see the ancient, religious wisdom surfacing, which is satisfied with the life that God has given. The modern equivalent saying would be "Bloom where you are planted." The procedures of modern agribusiness are in sharp contrast to that, for commodities are transferred all over the world, thus distancing people from the produce of their own land and rendering them dependent on international corporate manipulation. See Nelson, passim. See *Index:* Murmur.

bless God and not murmur (benedicant Deum . . . et non murmurent). A similar expression is found in Cyprian, *testim.* 3.14 (Vogüé, 2.581).

we warn them (ammonentes) is a nominative absolute, as is *considerans* in v. 5. The appearance of this relatively rare construction twice in one chapter indicates stylistic unity. It is also worth noting how the author refers to himself in the plural at least twice, 40.1 and 9, thus forming a sort of inclusion.

9.

Most of all (Ante omnia). The same expression is used in 34.6 to censure murmuring; it is truly one of Benedict's pet peeves. For *ante omnia* see note 36.1. Lentini, 366, notes that both *non murmurent* and *absque murmurationibus sint* are stylistically provocative constructions, indicating the seriousness of the writer. See *Index:* Murmur.

XLI: QUIBUS HORIS OPORTET REFICERE FRATRES

[1]A sancto Pascha usque Pentecosten, ad sextam reficiant fratres et sera cenent.

[2]A Pentecosten autem, tota aestate, si labores agrorum non habent monachi aut nimietas aestatis non perturbat, quarta et sexta feria ieiunent usque ad nonam; [3]reliquis diebus ad sextam prandeant; [4]quam prandii sextam, si operis in agris habuerint aut aestatis fervor nimius fuerit, continuanda erit et in abbatis sit providentia. [5]Et sic omnia temperet atque disponat qualiter et animae salventur et quod faciunt fratres absque iusta murmuratione faciant.

[6]Ab idus autem Septembres usque caput quadragesimae, ad nonam semper reficiant.

[7]In quadragesima vero usque in Pascha, ad vesperam reficiant; [8]ipsa tamen vespera sic agatur ut lumen lucernae non indigeant reficientes, sed luce adhuc diei omnia consummentur. [9]Sed et omni tempore, sive cena sive refectionis hora sic temperetur ut luce fiant omnia.

RB 41: AT WHAT HOURS SHOULD THE BROTHERS TAKE THEIR MEALS?

1. From Holy Easter until Pentecost, the brothers should dine at noon and have supper in the evening.

2. After Pentecost and throughout the summer, however, if the monks are not working in the fields, and if the heat of summer is not

bless God and not murmur (benedicant Deum . . . et non murmurent). A similar expression is found in Cyprian, *testim.* 3.14 (Vogüé, 2.581).

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RB 41: AT WHAT HOURS SHOULD THE BROTHERS TAKE THEIR MEALS?

1. From Holy Easter until Pentecost, the brothers should dine at noon and have supper in the evening.

2. After Pentecost and throughout the summer, however, if the monks are not working in the fields, and if the heat of summer is not

too oppressive, they should fast until None on Wednesday and Friday. 3. On the other days they should eat dinner at noon. 4. It is the abbot's responsibility to make the noon meal a regular thing if there is field work to be done or if there is a heat wave.

5. And so he should arrange all things with such moderation that souls might be saved and the brothers can do their work without justifiable murmuring.

6. From the thirteenth of September to the beginning of Lent, however, they are always to eat at None. 7. Finally, during Lent and until Easter, they should eat in the evening. 8. But the Office of Vespers should be arranged so that they need not eat by lamplight. Everything should be completed by the light of day. 9. At all times, whether for supper or the main meal, the hour should be set so that everything is done by daylight.

RB 41 Notes

1.

take their meal (reficiant). *Reficere* is Benedict's term for the single, main meal of the monastic day. In v. 3, he uses *prandere* for the midday meal on days when there is a supplementary evening meal (see note 40.1). As we noted in RB 39.5, when there were two meals in a day, some of the food was set aside for supper. This indicates that for the monks, feasting was essentially a matter of eating earlier in the day and not necessarily eating more. Likewise, fasting was mostly a matter of waiting until later in the day for the meal. See *Index:* Fast.

The parallel passage in RM 28.37-40 also has the meal at midday during the Easter season, but it permits a supper only on Thursday and Sunday evenings (Vogüé, 2.581-582).

Holy Easter (Sancto Pascha). It is not without importance that Benedict begins his discussion of the varying meal times with the Easter season. As in RB 48.2-3, where he also begins with Easter, he shows that the festal season is fundamental to his thinking, with fasting an important but secondary complement. For the Master, however, fasting is mentioned first (RM 28.3), and Lent is the first element considered in the horarium (RM 50.8ff.). This does not mean, however, that the Master has a negative or rigoristic attitude toward feasting. In fact, he is a good deal more at home with it than Benedict (Vogüé, 6.1075-1190). Both Jerome, *ep.* 22.35, and Cassian, *conf.* 21.23, report that the Egyptian cenobites moved their meal time forward from 3 P.M. to noon during Easter. A century later, Caesarius of Arles, *reg. virg.* 67, allows the abbess to arrange everything according to circumstances

(Holzherr, 220). And *vit. patr. Jur.* 31 permits the monks to eat twice a day in the summer, probably because of heavy work. See *Index:* Easter.

Lentini, 368, notes that the Romans ate their big meal in the evening, with a light meal earlier. He praises Benedict for arranging a more hygienic regimen with the light meal in the evening, which is certainly what modern health experts would recommend. But that still leaves questions about the monastic practice of a single meal late in the day. For an enthusiastic report on this practice, see Vogüé, 9.27-36. See *Index:* Fast.

2.

heat of summer (nimietas aestatis), literally, "the excess of summer." Benedict also speaks about the need for more sustenance in the summer heat in 40.5. The heat of summer in south Italy can be extremely oppressive and require careful marshaling of bodily energy.

working in the fields (labores agrorum . . . habent). In 48.7-8, the monks are asked to work on the harvest if other help is not available. For his part, the Master forbids heavy farm work for monks because it will make fasting too difficult (RM 86.25-26; see note 39.6). The Roman upper classes did not stoop to manual labor, so Benedict was clearly breaking with that culture. It did not take long for cultivated monasticism to revert to gentlemanly habits of avoiding manual labor, but the early Cistercians instituted field work as one of the main elements of their monastic renewal of the twelfth century. Lentini, 370, points out that the hours set aside for the monks to work (RB 48) were in the hottest part of the day—precisely that part of the day when farm workers rested from the heat. This leads him to think that the monks in fact did little field work. See *Index:* Work.

Wednesday and Friday (quarta et sexta feria) were the regular Christian fast days in antiquity, known already at the time of Tertullian in the third century (Lentini, 369). RM 28.9,19,21 adds Saturday (Vogüé, 2.582).

they should fast (jejunent). Even though the mid-afternoon meal is not as late as the Lenten fast day meal, Benedict still considers it a fast. It is, of course, later than the noon meal, which is eaten during the Easter festal season. In the overall picture of Benedict's horarium, the mid-afternoon meal is in the middle and serves as a standard.

None (ad nonas) would occur between 2:30 and 3:00 P.M. in high summer.

3.

prandii (eat dinner). Jerome, preface to Pachomian Rule, 5, describes

a meal regime quite similar to that of Benedict, with the exception that the Egyptian monks could eat *either* dinner or supper. Benedict certainly required that everyone be present at the noon meal, but probably did not require that for the evening meal. It is also interesting that Pachomius lists a heat wave as a reason for mitigating the fast. Modern people often eat less during times of oppressive heat, but those engaged in heavy labor must take in more food and more often to compensate for the loss of energy spent in cooling the body.

4.

This verse is surprisingly redundant and stylistically anomalous. It repeats the provision about field work and heat from v. 2. The subject (in the accusative case!) is "the noon meal," which is "to be continued." And such is in the abbot's discretion. I have tried to knit the elements into a more coherent unity.

the abbot's duty to see to it (in abbatis sit providentia) is a variant of *arbitrium abbatis* found in 39.6 and 40.5. The Master only allows the abbot to move the meal time in the case of guests (RM 72; Vogüé, 2.583). It is typical of Benedict to give the abbot more leeway than the Master in adjusting the monastic regimen. Lentini, 371, makes the interesting remark that this is not a mere statement of the abbot's power, but a strong recommendation that he use it to take good care of the monks.

a regular thing (continuanda erit). Lentini, 371, thinks that this is one of the most surprising mitigations in the entire Rule, considering the powerful tradition of the Wednesday and Friday fasts in the early Church. See *Index:* Fast.

5.

with such moderation (temperet). The same verb occurs twice in the second treatise on the abbot (64.17 and 19). RB 41 breathes the same spirit as that gentle and moderate treatise on the abbot. Although *temperet* is a main verb in the original text, I have made it subordinate to *disponat* because it seems to give a moderating color to that rather neutral word. Nonetheless, *tempero* does mean simply "regulate" in 41.9. Sentences like 41.5 are what give Benedict a reputation for moderation, but he can also flash out with considerable passion when the situation calls for it. See Kardong, 3.50-55; see *Index:* Measure.

souls might be saved (animae salventur) is the ultimate spiritual motive of the whole of Benedict's Rule. The term *salus* in its various forms shows up in many places in RB. To say that the salvation of souls depends on the wise dispositions of the abbot indicates Benedict's high estimation of moderation and order in the cenobitic community. And

since the point here is that mitigations are in place when they promote spiritual progress, it is quite clear that Benedict is not interested in ascetical rigor for its own sake. See *Index:* Ascesis.

Vogüé, 6.1201-1203, suggests that "souls might be saved" could be code language for the author's preference of fasting over field work. He bases this on a comparison with 64.17-19, where he thinks that the phrase "that which concerns God" refers to fasting, and "that which concerns the world" refers to hard manual labor. This is in turn based on the arguments in RM 11.94-105 and 86.25-26 that spiritual labor is of higher value than physical labor. The whole chain of logic here is somewhat vague, but it must be admitted that Benedict is also less than enthusiastic for field work (48.7-9). See *Index:* Work.

That Benedict is not hesitant to fine-tune the horarium is even more evident in RB 48, where he makes multiple adjustments of this sort. In my view, this does not mean he was fussy but rather anxious to tailor the ideal monastic program to actual human needs. See Kardong, 3.47-51.

without justified murmuring (absque justa murmuratione) is a surprising expression, given Benedict's abhorrence of murmuring. But it shows that murmuring does not simply refer to all complaints and protestations against the established order. In fact, some complaints are quite in place because the established order is itself unjust. It is instructive that some mss have *ulla* instead of *justa,* and other mss omit the word altogether; in other words, the scribes cannot believe that Benedict could envisage justifiable murmuring. They are more rigoristic than Benedict (Lentini, 372). See *Index:* Murmur. At the very beginning of cenobitism, Pachomius was already dealing with murmuring, and also open to the possibility that it might be justified. In *jud.* 5, he says that one who complains about the work should be reasoned with five times and then removed to the infirmary—presumably to see if he is in fact worn-out (Holzherr, 220).

6.

thirteenth of September (idus . . . Septembres). Some commentators like Steidle, 135, think that the "closed Ides" is meant here, which refers to September fourteenth. That is the feast of the Holy Cross, an important day in the early Church. But Penco and Vogüé believe that the date, whether the thirteenth or fourteenth, was chosen because it fell immediately after the first of the sixteen "Sundays after Pentecost" in the old Church calendar. The period from 13/14 September to Lent was called "monastic Lent." See Lentini, 372.

7.

in the evening (ad vesperam) could also mean "after Vespers," that is, the evening hour of the Divine Office. That is what is said in the next verse, where *vespera* does refer to the Divine Office. Lentini, 373, notes that the Lenten Eucharist was celebrated in the late afternoon (as is still done with the Station Masses in Rome), after which the faithful would have their single meal of the day. Benedict says nothing about the daily Eucharist for Lent or any other time.

8.

the hour of Vespers should be so arranged (vespera sic agatur). According to the Master (RM 50.70-71), Vespers should also be advanced in summertime so they will get enough sleep before the Night Office. Practically speaking, this meant that Vespers was always said about 6 P.M. or thereabouts.

by lamplight (lumen lucernae). Besides the fact that artificial lighting was of poor quality and costly in ancient times, it would be a concession to those fasting to move the evening meal up a bit during Lent (Lentini, 373). Light may be of symbolic significance to Benedict; it receives some development in Prol 9,13 and 28 where it stands for the time of salvation and grace for those who respond to the divine summons. See *Index:* Light.

Everything (Omnia) is restricted to the meal and all it entails. It would hardly be possible for all the work of the community to be completed during the daylight hours during the shortest days of winter. It should be remembered that even though Monte Cassino is in south Italy, it is still as far north as New York. Consequently, it is dark by 6 P.M. at the winter solstice.

9.

should be set (temperetur) could also be translated "should be set early enough." The root of *tempero* is *tempus* (time), so the word always refers to setting or doing something at the proper time. Along with this, there is the associated meaning "to moderate" (whence the word "to temper") which was clearly the meaning in 39.5 and could also be the meaning here. See *Index:* Measure.

everything (omnia). As in the preceding verse, we interpret this word to refer only to the evening meal. Lentini, 375, notes that the reading of the conferences (42.3) after supper would require only a single lamp for the reader. As for the dormitory, RB 22.4 demands that a lamp be burning there at all times.

RB 39–41 Overview

Introduction

To judge from the sheer extent of Benedict's remarks on meals and food, the subject is quite important to him. Along with RB 35 and 38, on which we have already commented, RB 39–41 continue the discussion of monastic dining, but now on the subject of "how much" and "when." Since food and drink are important aspects of asceticism, it is not surprising that all the early monastic Rules touch on them. The Master (RM 26–28) has a great mass of casuistic detail, which Benedict has greatly simplified. Despite the wealth of data, though, it is not so easy to locate precisely Benedict's point of view in these matters. As is often the case, our basic outline for these questions is the great commentary of Vogüé, 6.1125-1203. Even where we feel it necessary to disagree with him, his work forms the standard against which we compare our own findings.

A. RB 39: The Quantity of Food

When we compare RB 39 to its prototype in RM 26, we notice at once that Benedict has omitted the very interesting vv. 11-12, which read:

> However, on Sundays or other feast days, as also any day for the sake of guests who are present, the abbot may add to the fare whatever he wishes, as a superior is allowed to do, even some sweets in accordance with the *Lives* of the Fathers, where one reads that on feast days they asked the Lord for tasty food, and then an angel with a honeycomb appeared to them.

Those who are well-acquainted with the usually puritanical and mean-spirited Master may find this text astonishing, and it has to be admitted at once that nothing in RB 39–41 quite matches it. In comparison, Benedict seems to be rather perplexed and worried that monks are as much prone to excess as anyone else. For example, Benedict has added a discussion of *crapula* (gross excess and drunkenness) to the Master's *indigies* (indigestion) in RB 39.7-9.

Yet it is not true to say, either, that the Master is blissfully unaware of these possibilities. In fact, RM 26.3-10 goes on at great length to explain that part of the monk's daily ration of bread should be kept for supper on two-meal days so as to prevent greediness (see RB 39.6-9). The reservation of part of the ration was also discussed by Cassian in *conf.* 2.19, but from a rather different slant: he wants some bread saved in case a guest might arrive in the afternoon.

But Benedict definitely betrays a rigoristic mentality toward food and drink. Thus in 39.2 he speaks of the inability of some to eat certain

kinds of food as a "weakness" *(infirmitas).* Elsewhere (RB 40.1-4) he takes the more positive attitude that these things are essentially a matter of personal endowment, that is, a grace from God. But he still calls the ability to abstain a "strength" (*tolerantia:* see note 40.4).

At one point, Benedict's rigorism drives him to state a principle that must be labeled unbalanced: "For nothing is so out of place in a Christian life as gluttony." As a piece of rhetoric that may sound reasonable, but from the standpoint of New Testament spirituality it is simply untrue. The heart of Christian ethics is love, not asceticism. Consequently, the worst Christian sin is lack of love and hatred of the neighbor.

Still, it is not correct either to label RB 39 as systematically dualistic, as if the senses and passions are evil and something to be combatted and even eradicated. Thus, 39.9 quotes Luke 21:39 against overindulgence causing drowsiness, and it can be argued that Benedict's main concern is lack of vigilance rather than excess of pleasure.

One problem the interpreter of these chapters faces is their tendency to grammatical anomaly and confusion. Thus RB 39.10 manages to use *servare* in two different senses, while 39.5 uses it in still a third way (Vogüé, 6.1136). In 39.10, "Frugality should be maintained in all cases" is so loosely attached to the argument that it serves to confuse things rather than clarify them.

The problem with this cloudiness is that it makes precise interpretation difficult or impossible. For example, Vogüé is able to read 39.1-3 to mean that even though there are two dishes on the table, the individual is limited to only one of them. I do not agree with this restrictive interpretation, but it is certainly plausible. Sometimes Benedict's lack of precision is the result of his method of abbreviating the Master, but in this case he has added explanation. This is one of those cases where words may conceal more than they reveal.

RB 40: The Quantity of Drink

In many ways, RB 40 is like RB 39. Here again, much of the Master's excessively casuistic material has been dropped. But while RM 27 is amazingly serene and generous in spirit, Benedict's shortened treatise is not. The discussion, of course, is not merely about how much liquid a monk should drink, but how much wine. Therefore, there is always the specter of drunkenness and even alcoholism to be dealt with.

The cornerstone of Benedict's treatment of wine-drinking is simply abstinence. He quotes an aphorism from the *vit. patr.* 5.4,31 to the effect that monks do not drink wine at all (40.6). Then he immediately backs off from this demand with a wry remark that he knows no one

will listen to him: therefore, they should at least drink moderately. What are we to make of this performance?

First, there is a certain diffidence about it that is based on the fact that it is hard for one person to regulate the food and drink of others. The reason is that needs vary greatly, as do the gifts of God. In regard to wine, the divine endowment is emphasized (40.4): God gives some the strength to abstain, which implies that others have not received it. But then how can Benedict claim that all monks are not to drink wine? In 40.3, Benedict speaks of the "weakness" of some that seems to dictate that some wine be provided. But again, how can he call that a "weakness" which is merely the absence of the grace of abstinence?

One way to evaluate Benedict's attitude in this matter is to situate it in the whole sweep of the early monastic tradition. When we do that, we find that his claim that "Wine is absolutely not for monks" is anything but historical. For instance, the very text he quotes to prove his point is flanked by two other texts which refute it (*vit. patr.* 5.4,26; 31; 36). Another very early text that admits that the Desert Fathers drank wine is Palladius, *hist. Laus.* 7. As time went on, fewer and fewer monastic Rules attempted to remove wine from the menu, and by the time of Benedict it was the regular custom to allow it.

Probably the laxest of all monastic Rules in regard to wine is none other than the Rule of the Master. In RM 27 there is hardly a shadow of doubt about the goodness of the fruit of the vine, which is seen as a source of delight. Thus if the monks are given a gift of wine, they should consider it a gift of God and enjoy it to the full (RM 27.53-54). If a monk wishes to do something exceptional for God and the poor, he may abstain from wine (27.47-51). But in both instances, the emphasis is no longer on abstinence as a gift from God.

Compared to the almost hedonistic attitude of the Master, Benedict is certainly more reserved about wine-drinking. But does he have a bad conscience as Vogüé claims (6.1159-1166)? It is possible to read the text that way, but I would suggest that Benedict is also indulging in a bit of puckish humor at this point. We need to remember that wine was the regular beverage for the entire Mediterranean world (see notes 40.6-8); to ban it would have been a very radical position, the kind of thing Benedict normally avoids as self-defeating. In attempting to hold people to a standard of moderation in this regard, he may resort to a weapon that is only effective when wielded by someone who knows exactly what they are doing, namely, irony.

It would not be accurate to leave the impression that Vogüé is entirely critical of Benedict on this question. He remarks that the most important influence on this chapter may not be the *Lives of the Desert Fathers* at all, but Basil, *reg.* 9, which emphasizes the varied gifts and

the difficulty of legislating for them (6.1156-1157). And if he does take Benedict to task for being somewhat dour and pessimistic on this question, at least in doing this he is modifying his usual appreciation of this same quality in the writings of the Master.

Once we have put aside complete abstinence as a workable norm, the next problem is to determine what *is* feasible. In this matter, it is easy enough to generalize by saying that people should receive "enough" wine (40.3). "Enough" is indeed an important monastic concept, and it is perhaps the keyword of RB 39 (see note 39.3). It is instructive to see how Benedict makes a fine distinction between "enough" *(sufficere)* and "full" (*satietas;* 40.6-7). The latter may be the materialist ideal, but it is the bane of monastic asceticism. For instance, a writer like Cassian (*conf.* 12.11) claims that drinking one's fill of any liquid is the sure way to undermine chastity.

But Benedict still has to set down a reasonable daily ration of wine for his monks, and he chooses the *hemina* as that norm. And now the joke is on us, because we simply do not know what an *hemina* is. The guesses of commentators run from half a pint to a quart, but no matter how much it was, we must confess that given the very different cultural and climatic conditions, we cannot say now whether it was a little or a lot. Everything depends on context.

Finally, we should not overlook Benedict's closing comments on the possibility that the community may have to do with little or no wine because of local circumstances. It is very difficult for us to understand how hard this would be for Mediterranean people (see notes for 40.8-9) to bear, but Benedict exhorts them to bless God and not murmur. To live in accord with what the land offers and no more is the way of the simple and poor people of the world. It is a primary asceticism that is more important for the health of the planet than artificially contrived voluntary asceticisms that are not based on nature.

C. RB 41: The Hours for Meals

The modern reader may be bemused at the very idea of spending a whole chapter of the Rule merely arranging the times for meals. Nowadays we mostly go by the clock and tend to keep our horarium uniform throughout the year. But ancient people were much more sensitive to other timetables, both natural and supernatural. Consequently, they developed rather complex and even intricate horaria. In this matter it is helpful to note how Benedict relates to the preceding monastic tradition.

If we are to listen to John Cassian (*inst.* 5.23), the normal monastic meal practice was to eat one meal a day at about 3 P.M. (None). Cassian insists that this practice is normative *(statua, legitima, canonica)* and all

else is exceptional. Perhaps he is indulging in polemic against contrary practices. For his part, Benedict calls this mid-afternoon meal a "fast" (*jejunent:* 41.2), but it was his regular practice outside the Lenten and Easter seasons.

The Rule of the Master is very keen to maintain this normative dining horarium. Consequently, RM 28 begins with the discussion of the logical norm and not the exceptions. And RM 28.3-7 vigorously defends the single meal at None against the exceptions which he feels are undermining it. For his part, however, Benedict reverses the rigorism we have seen in RB 39–40 by arranging a surprisingly generous horarium for meals. The root of this generosity lies in two key factors.

First, he begins with a discussion of the Easter season. This is no accident since he also begins in the same way in RB 48, another discussion of the horarium. No doubt the reasons for this are theological, since Easter is the central Christian mystery and richly deserves to be kept in the forefront. Once he has taken Easter as his norm, Benedict feels obliged to adapt himself to its meaning and rhythms. Now Easter is primarily a time of feast, and not of fast, because of the presence of the risen Christ to his Church. As such, Easter is better symbolized by abundance than deprivation. Therefore, Benedict mitigates the usual monastic horarium for meals during Paschal time. Each day the meal is moved forward to noon *(prandium),* and it is followed by a lighter meal in the evening *(cena).* Some of the bread from the noon meal is kept for the evening, so the total may not have been much larger than the single meal at None. In contrast, the Master only has this two-meal program during the Easter octave. His community eats at noon until Pentecost, but there is only one meal a day (RM 28.37-38).

Benedict does not limit this leniency to the Easter seasons alone. During the rest of the summer, he generally maintains the same horarium. Although he mentions the traditional Christian fast days of Wednesday and Friday (41.3), he sets them aside when there is field work and/or excessive heat. Indeed, he urges the abbot to make use of this dispensation whenever it seems useful. One gets the impression that he does not want much fasting during the summer (see notes for 41.3-5).

To determine the meaning of this divergence between the two Rules, we have to look at the broader monastic tradition (see Vogüé, 6.1179-1182) where Benedict is part of a movement of the monasteries away from the Wednesday and Friday fasts in summer. This trend is most noticeable in the French monasteries of his time (Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 67; *reg. Tarn.* 9; Donatus, *reg.* 76). So Benedict is not alone in this matter. Nevertheless, all of these communities were definitely departing from an ancient practice, and one which *hist. mon.* 7 says must be main-

tained at all costs. But it is quite clear that the circumstances of life had shifted significantly from fourth-century Egypt to sixth-century Italy and Gaul, especially the attitude toward manual labor.

For example, while the Master is very generous in dispensing from fasting, the reason for leniency is always in the interest of charity, whether it be for guests or for the monks themselves. Benedict never takes that approach to mitigations; for him, the reason is always practical: people who are working hard need more food. The other reason is equally realistic: the heat of summer demands a different regimen of food and drink, especially for those doing manual labor.

What can we conclude from this difference? On the one hand, Benedict's easier horarium for meals does not indicate a sense of generous humaneness. Indeed, Benedict probably reacts against the Master's mitigations on behalf of guests (RB 53.10-11; RM 72.1-2) and also against his dispensation for monastic travelers (RM 28.27-36; RB 51; see Vogüé 6.1190-1203). Nowhere does Benedict exhibit the extremely permissive attitude toward food and drink that we see in RM 26.11; 27.43-46. Moreover, we notice that all the mitigations of Benedict (39.6; 40.5; 41.3) are yoked to the requirement of physical work. It is obvious that his monks were engaged in a good deal of hard, outdoor labor. He may be apologetic about this situation (see RB 48.7-9), but he knows that it must be faced realistically: hard work demands more food and drink.

The Master kicks hard against this goad. Twice in his Rule he unburdens himself of a polemic against physical work for monks. Both RM 11.94-105 and 86.25-26 state very clearly that spiritual labor is superior to the physical type. Therefore, deans should not be expected to do menial work (RM 11), and all the monks should be exempted from field work and even the management of farms because it will make it too hard for them to fast (RM 86).

Vogüé thinks that some of this mentality may perdure in a subtle way in Benedict's text. He notes that RB 41.5: "that souls *(animae)* may be saved" could be connected to RM 86.23-26 where *animae* occurs three times. Furthermore, RM 41.4-5 may be connected to RB 64.17 where "that which concerns God" may mean fasting, whereas "that which concerns the world" may mean physical work. Yet these arguments seem to lack cogency and they hardly show that Benedict was uneasy with physical work for monks. RB 41 indicates plainly that he was not.

XLII: UT POST COMPLETORIUM NEMO LOQUATUR

[1]Omni tempore silentium debent studere monachi, maxime tamen nocturnis horis. [2]Et ideo omni tempore, sive ieiunii sive prandii: [3]si tempus fuerit prandii, mox surrexerint a cena, sedeant omnes in unum et legat unus Collationes vel Vitas Patrum aut certe aliud quod aedificet audientes, [4]non autem Heptateuchum aut Regum, quia infirmis intellectibus non erit utile illa hora hanc scripturam audire, aliis vero horis legantur.

[5]Si autem ieiunii dies fuerit, dicta vespera parvo intervallo mox accedant ad lectionem Collationum, ut diximus. [6]Et lectis quattuor aut quinque foliis vel quantum hora permittit, [7]omnibus in unum occurrentibus per hanc moram lectionis, si qui forte in assignato sibi commisso fuit occupatus, [8]omnes ergo in unum positi compleant et, exeuntes a completoriis, nulla sit licentia denuo cuiquam loqui aliquid —[9]quod si inventus fuerit quisquam praevaricare hanc taciturnitatis regulam, gravi vindictae subiaceat—[10]excepto si necessitas hospitum supervenerit aut forte abbas alicui aliquid iusserit, [11]quod tamen et ipsud cum summa gravitate et moderatione honestissima fiat.

RB 42: NO ONE IS TO SPEAK AFTER COMPLINE

1. Monks ought to strive for silence at all times, but especially during the night hours. 2. Therefore, at all seasons, whether of fasting or not, this will be the arrangement. 3. On a nonfast day, as soon as they rise from supper, they should sit down in a group. Someone should read the *Conferences* or the *Lives of the Fathers,* or at least something else that will edify the hearers. 4. But the Heptateuch and the Books of Kings should not be read, for it will not be good for tired minds to hear these writings at that hour. They may, however, be read at other times.

5. If it is a fast day, though, once Vespers have been said and a short interval has passed, they should proceed immediately to the reading of the *Conferences* as we said. 6. Four or five pages should be read, or as much as time permits. 7. If some have been busy at assigned tasks, they assemble during this period of reading. 8. When all have come together, they should say Compline, and when they leave Compline, no one has permission to say anything more to anyone.

9. But if anyone is discovered transgressing this rule of silence, he should undergo a severe penalty. 10. Exceptions to this rule are when guests arrive or the abbot might perhaps command someone to do something. 11. Yet even this should be carried out with the utmost gravity and delicate reserve.

RB 42 Notes

RB 42 is connected to the chapters on meals that precede it in that it deals with the last phase of the horarium, namely, the hours of the night. Lentini, 376, thinks that RB 42–57 forms a loose unit of material on the internal organization of the cenobitic life. Actually, this chapter covers a good deal more than the question of silence; it is a rather "thick" description of the ritual for ending the day in the community.

Vogüé, 5.699-722, points out that RB 42 appears somewhat out of context because Benedict has moved much of its original surroundings elsewhere in his Rule. The prototype in RM 30 is situated in a bloc of chapters (29–33) which are all devoted to nighttime in the monastery. As it now stands, RB 42 has little connection to what follows it, namely, the chapters on the reconciliation of penitents (43–46). As for what precedes, RB 41 is divided into fasting and nonfasting periods, as is RB 42, but the latter still seems like a floating island between the blocs on meals and reconciliation.

1.
silence (silentium) is a traditional monastic value, the pursuit of which is found in all monastic Rules. Since night is a naturally quiet time, it is an ideal time for silent recollection. Benedict devotes all of RB 6 to the subject of silence, but provides little theological or spiritual reflection on the subject. Wathen argues that *taciturnitas* means the value of silence for Benedict, while *silentium* refers more to the physical absence of noise. That distinction seems hard to defend in a verse like this one. See *Index:* Silence.

strive for (studere) implies that they will not always succeed. Benedict does not impose an absolute ban on speech such as was attempted by certain monastic reformers (e.g., de Rancé) in later history. In fact, there are sometimes perfectly good reasons to speak at night; charity may demand the use of speech.

especially (maxime). The *a fortiori* type argument is used here to make a point about "monks." As in RB 19.1-2 and 49.1, Benedict first presents the general norm, and then demands a more concentrated application of it. RB 42 has in common with RB 49 that both of them open with material based on a Church Father (*ordo monasterii* and Pope Leo I) and end under the influence of the Master (Vogüé, 5.705). In RB 18.24 and 40.6, the logic goes the other way: "monks" keep such and such heroic standard of observance, so we should *at least* do our little part.

2.
at all seasons (omni tempore) is used three times in three successive

verses (41.9, 42.1 and 2), and each with a different nuance (Vogüé, 2.585). Here the reference must be to the various times of the year.

not (fast) (prandii) is used in a liturgical and not a gastronomic sense. Even a two-meal day did not necessarily mean more volume of food for the monks (see note 39.5). Moreover, it seems the "fast day" mentioned here is actually the ordinary winter day of one mid-afternoon meal.

Therefore (Ideo). The principle stated in v. 1 will now be explained in some detail. Even though the order given is "fast and feast," the order of the discussion will be reversed.

this will be the arrangement has been supplied to a sentence fragment. Manning, 115, thinks that v. 2 explains "at all times" of v. 1, but that seems to be reaching for an unusual meaning where the obvious one is adequate.

3.

nonfast day (prandii). See previous verse. The Rule of the Master (30.1-10) does not have reading before Compline but rather foot-washing and a conference by the abbot to prepare the community for night-silence. Benedict focuses on reading, but even more on gathering the brothers as he does in RB 9.2 and 12.1.

Conferences or Lives of the Fathers (collationes vel vitas patrum). Most commentators understand these words as referring to the *Conferences* of Cassian and the *Lives of the Desert Fathers (vit. patr.)* translated into Latin by Pelagius the Deacon shortly before the time of Benedict. Since Benedict himself quotes both of these sources, there is nothing to prove this interpretation is wrong, but it has also been noted by Wathen, 3.101-118 and 6.208-231, that both *collationes* and *vitas* are generic terms. When evaluating these arguments, it should be remembered that some scholars like Wathen, Leroy, 111–137, and Gribomont, 1.229-262, deemphasize the influence of Cassian and the desert tradition on Benedict, while others, such as Vogüé, 21.275-285, give Cassian a primary place among Benedict's mentors. Personally, I see no reason to deny that Cassian is a major influence on Benedict, but they are by no means always in agreement. See Kardong, 7.233-252. One of the most puzzling features of the whole discussion is this: even though Cassian's writings came under a cloud because of alleged "semi-Pelagianism" about A.D. 530, Benedict still endorses him without reserve. See Vaggagini, 17–83.

Lives of the Fathers (vitas patrum). Besides the work of this name mentioned above, Lentini, 379, suggests that the following works may

be meant: *Historia monachorum in Aegypto; Vita Pachomii; Vita Pauli; Vita Hilarionii.* See also RB 73.5.

someone should read (legat unus) does not imply that this reading will be done by "just anyone who happens to pick up the book" (see 38.1). The evening reading is not known by the Master (RM 30) and appears to be a new custom introduced by Benedict. That may be why he describes it in such detail (Holzherr, 223).

edify (aedificet). In note 38.12 I argued that this verb can refer to the building up of the spiritual or social body of hearers. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Benedict underlines the communal aspect here by the phrase "sit down together." Here, as in 38.12, Benedict is concerned that the type of material be read that will "build up" the hearers. In the next verse he will rule out the "Heptateuch or the Books of Kings" as unsuitable for this purpose. While it is often assumed that these books are unsuitable for evening hearing because of their erotic episodes, it could be argued just as plausibly that they are problematic because of their violence. If the latter is the objection, it would not help the brothers to reconcile their differences "before the setting of the sun" (4.73). What could "tear down" the communal body more than violence and hatred? See *Index:* Edification.

they should sit (sedeant). The same arrangement is found in *ordo monasterii* 2.10-12, a fourth-century North African text that Benedict probably knew (Lentini, 378).

4.

Heptateuch (Heptatichum). The first seven books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges. The more usual configuration is the Hebrew Pentateuch. Benedict uses the corrupted form *Heptáticum* for the Greek *Heptáteuchum*. This spelling arose from the correct accentuation on the second syllable (Lentini, 380). Cassian, *conf.* 19.16, speaks about avoiding dangerous books of Scripture (Vogüé, 5.708).

the Books of Kings (Regum) includes 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings. The Vulgate enumeration had four Books of Kings.

good (utilis). This term seems to have more spiritual significance for Benedict than the banal word "useful." This is especially obvious in 72.7, but it is also noticeable in 3.3; 3.12 and 7.18. See *Index:* Useful.

tired minds (infirmis intellectibus) is the felicitous suggestion of Lentini, 380, though he does not incorporate it into his translation. It seems preferable to "weak understanding" *(RB 1980)* because that is a problem that will not be solved by the change of hour. See *Index:* Weakness.

They should, however, be read at other times. (Aliis vero horis legantur). By this explanatory clause Benedict shows that he is not about to censor the Bible, no matter how earthy it might be. It also indicates that he is not willing to ignore quietly these sections of the Scripture; they are to be read, but at a more suitable time.

5.

a fast day (jejunii dies). Benedict must be talking about a day of mitigated fast (see note 41.2) when the meal would be eaten at mid-afternoon. During the Lenten fast, the meal was in the evening and so the schedule would be like a day with two meals (42.3-4; Lentini, 380). See *Index:* Fast.

a short interval has passed (parvo intervallo). A brief respite between similar events such as Vespers, reading and Compline is liturgically and psychologically useful. A sure way to destroy the distinctive quality of these services is to run them together; hence the opposition of liturgists to the amalgamation of the Divine Office with the Mass. The example of Cluny ought to serve as a warning that human nature cannot support endless liturgies (see RB 8.4).

6.

or as much as time permits (vel quantum hora permittit). The context of vv. 6-7 shows that "the time" meant here is that which is needed for the monks to assemble. Unfortunately, this seems to make reading a mere time-filler or stopgap while the community comes together. Yet this glimpse into the actual working of an ancient community is reassuring, since it shows that they lived under many of the same time constraints that we ourselves do. It has to be insisted, though, that persons dribbling into an assembly do not enhance the concentration of either the reader or the hearers. Manning, 114, takes another tack, claiming that the "time" allowed for reading would be gauged by the amount of daylight remaining (41.8-9). And yet this same commentator maintains the grammatical ties between 42.6-8, thus undermining his own argument. Lentini, 381, reminds us that the ancient monks already had hours of *lectio divina* during the day, so this reading period was not especially necessary for them. See *Index:* Lectio Divina.

four or five pages should be read (lectis quattuor aut quinque foliis). Although this whole verse and the next one are ablative absolutes that modify the main verb in v. 8 (*compleant* = they should say Compline), I have converted them into two independent sentences to suit the modern English ear. I have taken the further liberty of introducing "should" into the mix, which is a very common verbal mood in a

monastic Rule. It might be added that four or five pages of public reading is a considerable amount, perhaps taking half an hour's time, given ordinary page sizes for ancient books.

7.

If some (si qui forte). Some mss have "unless," but this is apparently a misunderstanding by the scribe, for clearly Benedict wants all to assemble *(omnibus in unum occurrentibus).* This latter phrase contributes to the strongly cenobitic flavor of this chapter. The subject in the first part of v. 7 is plural in number but the subject of the second part is singular. Since there seems to be no purpose in this variety, I have unified it to smooth out the translation.

busy at assigned tasks (assignato sibi commisso fuit occupatus). *Assignato* and *commisso* are pleonastic and have been reduced to the single "assigned."

8.

When all have come together (omnes ergo in unum positi). This is the grammatical heart of vv. 6-8. It is also the third time (vv. 3,7,8) that the author speaks of coming or sitting together. Stylistically, the chapter is rather repetitious and long-winded, but the content is interesting enough.

and when they leave Compline (exeuntes a completoriis). Strictly speaking, this present active participle describes the physical exit from the oratory, but the context makes it clear enough that the phrase is meant to be completed action. We often treat participles in the same loose fashion in English: "Passing over the bridge, he stopped in a restaurant." I have used a purposely vague verb form to render this phrase. At any rate, the phrase shows that Compline was said in the oratory; RM 30.13 seems to indicate that those monks said Compline in the dormitory (Vogüé, 2.585).

9.

transgressing (praevaricare) is an unusual word, used only once in RB *(hapax legoumenon).* In classical Latin it meant to "straddle" an issue or to collude in evil (OLD, s.v.). In patristic Latin the meaning seems to have become more general: to "transgress" a commandment or law, though there is still the sense of an illegitimate crossing of boundaries (Blaise).

RM 30.8-29 develops a vast casuistry of night silence, which Benedict has greatly simplified.

10.

guests should arrive (necessitas hospitum supervenerit). RM 30.24-27

speaks of the arrival of guests and that could be what is meant here (Manning, 117). Literally, "the needs of guests should occur." The reference here is more likely to the untimely arrival of guests than the need to serve them after they have integrated themselves into the monastic horarium.

11.

delicate reserve (moderatione honestissima). The words are based on Lentini's elegant Italian, and they are in the same superlative degree as "utmost gravity." Vogüé, 2.586, notes a similar expression in Basil, *reg.* 137, which is on the same subject. Anyone who has had to knock on the door of a strange monastery at night knows the difference between "delicate reserve" and a severe countenance. Of course, one must practice charity to the community members, who are now resting, as well as to the guests. See *Index:* Measure.

For Pachomius, the night silence is one of the ways of preserving chastity among the monks (*pr.* 88; 94). That same purpose for night silence is carried on by *reg. or.* 44; Isidore 13.2 and Fructuosus 1.17 (Vogüé, 5.719-720). Cassian also speaks of the importance of this practice (*inst.* 2.15,2), although most of the monastic conversations recorded in his *Conferences* take place at night. Probably the separate cells of the hermits would make this less likely to disturb the rest and recollection of others. Although Vogüé, 5.719-722, does not think that Pachomius' regulation influenced Benedict, he feels that *honestissima* may indicate that immorality was one of his reasons for night silence. No commentators that I consulted corroborate this.

utmost gravity (summa gravitate). This term occurs in RB 6.3 as part of a genitive of inherence: *taciturnitatis gravitatem*, and both of these words also figure in RB 42.9-11. For Vogüé, 2.586, *taciturnitas* signifies absolute silence. But for Wathen, 7.200-201, the term refers more to a deep respect for the value of silence. He derives this opinion largely from the equality of *taciturnitas* and *gravitas* in RB 6.3.

XLIII: DE HIS QUI AD OPUS DEI VEL AD MENSAM TARDE OCCURRUNT

[1]Ad horam divini officii, mox auditus fuerit signus, relictis omnibus quaelibet fuerint in manibus, summa cum festinatione curratur, [2]cum gravitate tamen, ut non scurrilitas inveniat fomitem. [3]Ergo nihil operi Dei praeponatur.

speaks of the arrival of guests and that could be what is meant here (Manning, 117). Literally, "the needs of guests should occur." The reference here is more likely to the untimely arrival of guests than the need to serve them after they have integrated themselves into the monastic horarium.

11.

delicate reserve (moderatione honestissima). The words are based on Lentini's elegant Italian, and they are in the same superlative degree as "utmost gravity." Vogüé, 2.586, notes a similar expression in Basil, *reg.* 137, which is on the same subject. Anyone who has had to knock on the door of a strange monastery at night knows the difference between "delicate reserve" and a severe countenance. Of course, one must practice charity to the community members, who are now resting, as well as to the guests. See *Index:* Measure.

For Pachomius, the night silence is one of the ways of preserving chastity among the monks (*pr.* 88; 94). That same purpose for night silence is carried on by *reg. or.* 44; Isidore 13.2 and Fructuosus 1.17 (Vogüé, 5.719-720). Cassian also speaks of the importance of this practice (*inst.* 2.15,2), although most of the monastic conversations recorded in his *Conferences* take place at night. Probably the separate cells of the hermits would make this less likely to disturb the rest and recollection of others. Although Vogüé, 5.719-722, does not think that Pachomius' regulation influenced Benedict, he feels that *honestissima* may indicate that immorality was one of his reasons for night silence. No commentators that I consulted corroborate this.

utmost gravity (summa gravitate). This term occurs in RB 6.3 as part of a genitive of inherence: *taciturnitatis gravitatem*, and both of these words also figure in RB 42.9-11. For Vogüé, 2.586, *taciturnitas* signifies absolute silence. But for Wathen, 7.200-201, the term refers more to a deep respect for the value of silence. He derives this opinion largely from the equality of *taciturnitas* and *gravitas* in RB 6.3.

XLIII: DE HIS QUI AD OPUS DEI VEL AD MENSAM TARDE OCCURRUNT

[1]Ad horam divini officii, mox auditus fuerit signus, relictis omnibus quaelibet fuerint in manibus, summa cum festinatione curratur, [2]cum gravitate tamen, ut non scurrilitas inveniat fomitem. [3]Ergo nihil operi Dei praeponatur.

[4]Quod si quis in nocturnis vigiliis post gloriam psalmi nonagesimi quarti, quem propter hoc omnino subtrahendo et morose volumus dici, occurrerit, non stet in ordine suo in choro, [5]sed ultimus omnium stet aut in loco quem talibus neglegentibus seorsum constituerit abbas, ut videantur ab ipso vel ab omnibus, [6]usque dum completo opere Dei publica satisfactione paeniteat. [7]Ideo autem eos in ultimo aut seorsum iudicavimus debere stare ut, visi ab omnibus, vel pro ipsa verecundia sua emendent; [8]nam, si foris oratorium remaneant, erit forte talis qui se aut recollocet et dormit, aut certe sedit sibi foris vel fabulis vacat, et *datur occasio maligno;* [9]sed ingrediantur intus, ut nec totum perdant et de reliquo emendent.

[10]Diurnis autem horis, qui ad opus Dei post versum et gloriam primi psalmi qui post versum dicitur non occurrerit, lege qua supra diximus in ultimo stent, [11]nec praesumant sociari choro psallentium usque ad satisfactionem, nisi forte abbas licentiam dederit remissione sua, [12]ita tamen ut satisfaciat reus ex hoc.

[13]Ad mensam autem qui ante versu non occurrerit, ut simul omnes dicant versu et orent et sub uno omnes accedant ad mensam, [14]qui per neglegentiam suam aut vitio non occurrerit, usque secunda vice pro hoc corripiatur; [15]si denuo non emendaverit, non permittatur ad mensae communis participationem, [16]sed sequestratus a consortio omnium reficiat solus, sublata ei portione sua vinum, usque ad satisfactionem et emendationem. [17]Similiter autem patiatur qui et ad illum versum non fuerit praesens qui post cibum dicitur.

[18]Et ne quis praesumat ante statutam horam vel postea quicquam cibi aut potus praesumere; [19]sed et cui offertur aliquid a priore et accipere renuit, hora qua desideraverit hoc quod prius recusavit aut aliud, omnino nihil percipiat usque ad emendationem congruam.

RB 43: THOSE WHO ARRIVE LATE FOR THE DIVINE OFFICE OR TABLE

1. At the time for the Divine Office, as soon as he hears the signal the monk should drop whatever is in hand and rush there with the greatest haste. 2. But he should do so with dignity so as not to provide an occasion for silliness. 3. Therefore nothing should be put ahead of the Work of God.

4. If anyone arrives at the Night Office after the *Gloria* of Psalm 94—and for that reason we want it said very slowly and with pauses—he is not to stand in his own place in choir. 5. But he must stand in the last place or in a place which the abbot has set apart for those who err in this way. Thus they can be seen by him and by everyone 6. until they

make public satisfaction at the end of the Divine Office. 7. We have decided they must stand in the last place or apart so that they will change their ways under the shame of being seen by all. 8. For if they were to remain outside, there might be some among them who would return to bed and sleep, or sit themselves down outside and gossip, *giving the devil an opening*. 9. No, they should come in; and then they won't lose everything and will improve for the future. 10. At the Day Hours, however, those who do not arrive at the Work of God until after the versicle and *Gloria* of the first psalm which is said after the verse—let them stand in the last place according to the rule we have just laid down. 11. Nor should they presume to join the choir of those singing the psalms until they have made satisfaction, unless perhaps the abbot gives them permission to do so by his pardon. 12. But the one who is guilty of this fault must still make amends.

13. If someone does not arrive at table before the verse, so that all might say the verse together and pray and sit down to table as one, 14. and if he comes late through his own negligence or bad will, he should be rebuked up to the second time. 15. But if he still does not reform, he should be denied participation in the common table. 16. He should eat alone and cut off from the company of all; his portion of wine should be taken away; and let this go on until he has made amends and changed for the better. 17. Whoever is not present at the verse that is said after the meal should suffer the same punishment.

18. No one may presume to eat or drink anything at all before the appointed time or thereafter.

19. But if someone is offered something by the superior and turns it down, but then decides later that he wants what he previously refused, he should receive absolutely nothing until he has made a fitting amends.

RB 43 Notes

T

The title is like that of RM 73, except that Benedict has changed *fratribus* to *his,* thus creating uniform titles for the next three chapters, all of which are about monastic penalties. In fact, RB 43–46 really complete RB 23–30, which speak of penalties without arranging for reconciliation. Now, after a long interval of thirteen chapters, Benedict resumes his treatise. Although we can never really know the reasons for this split, it certainly does serve to add seriousness to the penalties.

The prototype of RB 43 is RM 73. The main thing that Benedict has taken from the Master is to discuss tardiness at both choir and meals in the same chapter. But Benedict has dropped a large section of RM 73 (12-19) on varying culpability for coming late. Nowhere in RB 43–45 is

there any mention of intentionality. No doubt this is done to avoid the complex and lengthy casuistry involved, but it has the unfortunate side effect of making the question seem mechanical: no excuses are allowed. See Kardong, 9, for a detailed study of this whole chapter. RB 43 discusses tardiness at meals and in doing so continues the theme of RB 35–41.

1.

as soon as he hears the signal (mox auditus fuerit signus). The corresponding passage in RM 54.1-2 (Vogüé, 2.587) is slightly different: "When the signal struck in the oratory indicates that the time for the Divine Office has come." By explicitly mentioning the act of hearing and responding, Benedict sets the theme for this chapter: it is not promptness but willingness to respond to the call of the Lord mediated through monastic obedience. See *Index:* Listen.

The circumstances of ancient life made punctuality quite a different thing than it is for us today. There were no mechanical clocks to keep an eye on, much less digital devices to regulate life down to the second. In the pretechnological age, life was lived by the rhythms of the sun, which varies from season to season. RB 47.1 indicates that the monastic horarium is personally controlled by the abbot, and so response to the signal is not an exercise in the virtue of promptness but in obedience. Thus it is not entirely correct to characterize Benedict as someone interested in timetables and efficiency; he is more concerned about wholehearted willingness to answer the call of God in the moment.

The ultimate source of 43.1 is probably Cassian, *inst.* 4.12, which tells the memorable story of the Egyptian monks laying down their pens at the signal for the Divine Office. They did not even complete the omega! Cassian makes it clear that obedience comes before even contemplation, but his point is not to bolster autocratic authority. Likewise Benedict urges alacrity not in the interest of institutional efficiency but as an actualization of the spirit of complete readiness to carry out the will of God. See notes for 5.7-9. On the other hand, there certainly are tasks that are not automatically to be abandoned at the signal. Essential jobs in the community must be carried on, and especially those related to charity (Lentini, 384).

rush there in great haste (summa cum festinatione curratur). One hesitates to render this phrase so vividly, but there seems no choice. Nowhere else does Benedict use both *currere* and *festinare* together. The verb *currere* means "run" but the next phrase seems to rule out actual running. Likewise, "in great haste" is toned down from the superlative degree in the Latin. All of this is probably to be interpreted in a spiritual

sense: monks ought to be eager to do what the Lord (and the horarium) requires in the moment. See Kardong, 6.163-164; see *Index:* Run.

2.

But he should do so with dignity (cum gravitate autem). The same vocabulary is used in RB 22.6 for the same subject. In RM 55.9-10, the Master warns the brothers working far away (fifty paces) not to run too fast to church; otherwise there may be an uproar. In order to prevent that, he excuses those working farther away from coming. They say the Office privately. See *Index:* Gravity.

provide an occasion for silliness (scurrilitas non inveniat fomitem), literally, "silliness not find an incentive." *Scurrilitas* can have lewd connotations, but it does not seem to have them here. In RB 6.8, Benedict condemns it as something shameful, but in 49.7 he waves it aside as something monks should merely cut back on during Lent.

3.

Therefore nothing should be put ahead of the Work of God. (Ergo nihil operi Dei praeponatur). This famous Benedictine motto appears to be self-explanatory, but it may not be so transparent as it seems. First is the question of its relation to what precedes. *Ergo* (therefore) seems to make a logical conclusion to the first two verses, but that still leaves a good deal of leeway for interpretation. Next, it appears that Benedict got the saying from one of the Lérins Rules, perhaps Porcarius, *mon.* 12, where it refers to the primacy of prayer in general. No one can argue with that, but the saying in 43.3 is often understood as an absolute statement about the primacy of the Divine Office. Holzherr, 226, notes that "nothing is to be preferred" to Christ in 4.21 and 72.11; he sees 43.3 as the means of putting this internal principle into practice. But can one not say the same of all monastic obedience? Benedict of Aniane (eighth century) attempted to put this maxim into literal practice—and ended by creating a serious imbalance in the Benedictine horarium. It would be better to see 43.3 as an integral part of the first three verses: When the bell for Office rings, nothing is to be put ahead of the Office. See *Index:* Work of God.

4.

This verse opens the section on the Divine Office (43.4-12). In it Benedict will discuss only Vigils and the Little Hours, omitting Lauds no doubt because it came so soon after Vigils. Why he does not mention Vespers, we don't know, but the principle would be the same: whoever comes late must take a place apart in choir. It is noteworthy that Benedict does not expel monks from Office for tardiness, as the case in RM 73.1-5.

Gindele, 1.21, thinks that this indicates an increasing appreciation for the importance of liturgy among the monks of the sixth century.

Gloria of Psalm 94 (Gloriam psalmi nonagesimi quarti). No mention is made here of Psalm 3, which is to be said first according to RB 9.2. Gindele, 4.315-318, thinks this is an indication that RB 43 is an earlier composition than RB 9. Like many scholars, he considers RB 8–18 to be a late addition to the Rule.

very slowly and with pauses (omnino subtrahendo et morose . . . dici), literally, "altogether protractedly and slowly." I have taken the liberty of interchanging the adverbs to make it sound better in English. Steidle, 137, has this translation, which seems to fit the practicalities of the situation. Gindele, 4.315-318, thinks that this was accomplished by a cantor, who simply paused between verses. For a whole choir to sing the psalm very slowly would have been extremely difficult. In RM 73, the abbot is to prolong his private prayers until most of the brothers have arrived in the oratory.

The tradition of allowing for a certain amount of tardiness at the Night Office begins with Pachomius, *pr.* 9, who only considers one who comes after three prayers to be punishable. The Master and Benedict are even more lenient, since they want the prayers said slowly. No doubt it was well understood that some people cannot move very quickly upon rising from sleep. RB 22.6-8 (see notes) offers another glimpse at the same question, and it also shows the compassion of the author.

not to stand in his own place (non stet in ordine suo). The concept of each member having "his own place" was very important for Benedict (see RB 63) and for all of traditional monasticism. It is an important corollary of the virtue of stability (see RB 1 Overview; 58.9,17): not only does one commit oneself unconditionally to the community, but one is given a place in the group. In a hierarchical society, to be "displaced" from the ordinary scheme of things was taken very seriously. This form of punishment is unknown to the Master, who does not have a system in which each monk has a rank. See *Index:* Rank.

5.

those who err in this way (talibus negligentibus), that is, those who come late to the Divine Office.

6.

make public satisfaction (publica satisfactione paeniteat), literally, "do penance by public satisfaction." Most likely this involved some kind of prostration, as will be described in RB 44. Until recent years, all those

who arrived late for the Work of God would automatically "kneel out" in the choir before taking their place. Those who missed a previous Office would kneel out during the saying of the oration at the end of each Office. This would also include those who had missed an Office that day. Since this was done regardless of whether one was "negligent" or not, the custom became rather stilted, and so it was dropped by most monasteries after the liturgical reforms of Vatican II.

The term *satisfactio,* which is prominent and frequent in this part of RB (43.6,11,16; 44.3,8,9; 45.1; 46.3) connotes the objective redemption of a debt or penalty. As such it is in a different category than terms like guilt and punishment. G. Mansini, 1, shows how *satisfactio* implies the good will and complete willingness of the monk to do what is necessary to regain a place in the good graces of God and the community. In the Middle Ages, theologians like Anselm (a Benedictine) made *satisfactio* a cornerstone of the theology of the atonement (see Mansini, 2.100-121).

7.

We have decided (judicavimus) should be given its full judicial weight here and not trivialized by "We think." In fact, Benedict is going against much of the monastic tradition by not excluding latecomers from choir. Therefore, he explains his reasons at some length in vv. 7-9. Besides RM 73, the following texts arrange for the expulsion of latecomers: Cassian, *inst.* 3.7; *Reg. Macarii,* 14; Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 10.

under the shame of being seen by all (visi ab omnibus, vel pro ipsa verecundia). Many interpretations seem possible here. Lentini, 388, thinks that *vel* means "at least," so he distinguishes between the public pressure of notoriety and the internal pressure of shame. The problem with this is that shame is precisely the loss of honor in the eyes of the community. Still, I must admit that Lentini's rendition accounts for *ipsa,* "very shame," and mine does not.

Malina and Neyrey, 25–66, claim that the avoidance of public shame was and is the most powerful motivator in Mediterranean society. They are commenting on Palestinian society at the time of Jesus, but there is little reason to think this does not apply to Italian society in the time of Benedict. This sociological interpretation of shame is not to be confused with psychological shame. The latter refers to a deep sense of personal worthlessness induced by traumatic experience at an early age (see J. Fowler and R. Karen).

8.

sleep . . . set themselves down . . . gossip . . . giving (dormit . . . sedit sibi . . . fabulis vacat . . . datur). Grammatically speaking, all these

verbs should be placed in the subjunctive mood, but Benedict keeps them in the present indicative. In doing so, he contributes to the lively color of this little scene which shows clearly enough that people were not all that different in those days than they are now.

giving the devil an opening (et datur occasio maligno). See note 38.8. See *Index:* Devil.

9.

they won't lose everything (ut nec totum perdant). Besides avoiding the perils of what might happen outside, those who come in to the Office will benefit from the public prayer itself. Linderbauer thinks *nec totum* indicates that even though they have lost part of the Office, they won't lose it all. I see *ut nec* as a result clause and not a purpose clause, which rules out that meaning.

for the future (de reliquo). Another possible meaning is "on the other hand," but the phrase refers to the future in 4.58 and that seems to be the more obvious sense here (Lentini, 389).

10.

those who do not arrive (qui . . . non occurrerit). Even though the verb is singular, I have made it plural to square with the main verb (*stent:* let them stand) which is in the same number.

Day Hours (Diuris . . . horis) could mean either the classic Day Hours of Prime, Terce, Sext and None (Vogüé, 2.589) or all the Hours of the Office except Vigils (Lentini, 390). If we restrict the meaning to the Little Hours of Prime, Terce, Sext and None, we are left with no regulation for Lauds, Vespers and Compline. The distinction seems to be with Vigils as the true night Hour (vv. 4-9). The omission of the hymn in this verse is explained by Lentini as due to Benedict's wish to simplify the discussion. According to 17.3, a hymn was sung at the Day Hours, but Holzherr, 381, thinks that is an interpolation.

after the versicle (post versum) is a reference to the opening of all the Day Hours: *Deus in adjutorium meum intende*. Lentini thinks that Benedict originally meant to say that anyone who came after the Gloria of this versicle would be considered late. However, experience taught him that more leeway was needed, so he added the first psalm. It also leaves us with a particularly awkward passage to read.

join in the choir of those singing the psalms (sociari choro psallentium) seems to refer to the actual singing of the psalms by a schola of cantors (Lentini, 392). Everyone present would join in the refrains. This prohibition was not mentioned in regard to the Night Office. Both RM

73.17-18 and Cassian, *inst.* 3.7,1 have the same rule, but for them it has a different import since they have banished the latecomers from the oratory. Apparently they do not want the cacophony of monks singing loudly out in the yard.

by his pardon (remissione sua). The abbot could easily allow them to join in the psalmody by a nod of the head or some sign. It should be remembered that only one who truly values community life will find these prohibitions difficult (Holzherr, 227).

12.

must still make amends (ita tamen ut satisfaciat) is an especially obscure way of putting the matter. Literally, "in such a way, though, that the guilty party make amends." In other words, the abbatial pardon does not excuse one from prostration at the end of the service (see 43.6).

13.

With v. 13, we come to the second section of RB 43, namely, the material on tardiness at meals. The fact that the chapter gives about equal space to both liturgy and meals is significant, for it shows how highly Benedict values the common meal as a symbol of cenobitic life. The same nexus occurs in RB 35.15-18 and especially in 24.4-5. See notes for those verses.

together . . . as one (simul . . . sub uno). As in the previous chapter (42.3,7,8), communal unity is the main reason given here for the regulations. By contrast, RM 73.10 has the strange rationale that whoever does not speak to God (pray) should not "have a word from any man" (Vogüé, 2.590). These expressions could be read as a need for punctuality and order on the part of Benedict, but there is more at stake than that (see note 43.1). The community meal is a primary symbol of the very life and unity of the group; when it is disrupted by inconsiderate or chaotic behavior, there is a threat to the common good that cannot be ignored or condoned. When the Christian significance of the common meal is added to this natural base, the meaning of the meal is all the more heightened. The deterioration of family dining in our own culture is a worrisome development. See Overviews for RB 35 and 38–41.

14.

through his own negligence or bad will (per negligentiam suam aut vitio). Lentini, 393, thinks that this also applies to those coming late to choir, but I doubt that (see note 43T).

bad will (vitio). Since this word is contrasted *(aut)* with "negligence," it must connote a deliberate offense. Holzherr, 227, says this about

vitio: "By 'fault' is meant inner resistance against identification with the community, and this manifests itself in tardiness." See *Index:* Vice.

and if he comes late (occurrerit) is the same verb as the one translated "arrive" in the previous verse. The author has interrupted himself with a long passage and now repeats himself in picking up the thread of his thought. In order to avoid this gaffe in English, I have varied the verbs.

cut off from the company of all (sequestratus a consortio omnium) probably means complete exclusion from the refectory, which is mentioned in 24.3-5 and 25.5. It could mean that one had to eat apart but in the same refectory as with the choir discipline described in 43.4-9, but the expression seems too strong for that. There is no indication here that the culprit will eat three hours after the rest of the monks as in 24.5. See Lentini, 394.

It is not often that Benedict punishes a fault with an "educational penalty," that is, one designed precisely to attack the fault in its specificity (Vogüé, 5.772-776). Here, though, the one who damages community by his negligence is deprived of community itself.

his portion of wine should be taken away (sublata ei portione sua de vino). It is a severe penalty to take wine away from an Italian, but Pachomius, *pr.* 32, and Basil, *reg.* 97, went even further: they turned the tardy away from the refectory altogether.

17.

Whoever is not present at that verse which is said at the end of the meal (qui et ad illum versum non fuerit praesens qui post cibum dicitur). Again, the point is not just etiquette or even good order, but the integrity of this important community event. When people wander in and out of meals at will, they become the scene of *feeding* rather than *dining*. Then the business of foraging for oneself takes precedence over the very different human gesture of sharing bread in common with those who share our whole life, namely, the community.

18.

presume . . . to eat or drink (praesumat . . . quicquam cibi aut potus praesumere). The same word, *praesumere,* is used in two different senses in this verse. The infinitive probably means "to take" or "to eat," but etymologically it could mean "eat before" (Lentini, 395–396). As for "presume," Benedict often uses this word when he is talking about a fault he especially dislikes. See *Index:* Presumption. The use of *praesumere* and *quidquam* (anything at all) gives this prohibition a very harsh tone. The dictum is aimed at individualism rather than hedonism. Cassian, *inst.* 4.18, tells of monks who refused to eat fallen fruit,

and Basil, *reg.* 18 warns against the "sin of eating in secret." Pachomius, *reg.* 71-80, contain many prohibitions against casual eating in orchard and field. In *reg. serv.* 3.1, Augustine admonishes monks who cannot fast to at least refrain from eating between meals. Finally, Benedict's contemporary, Caesarius of Arles, *reg. virg.* 30 and 41, also opposes eating between meals. It would seem unreasonable to include water in such a rule.

19.

amends (emendationem). Throughout this chapter, I have translated *emendatio* and *emendare* as "improvement," while rendering *satisfactio* as "amends." Even though there does not seem to be a clear-cut distinction between these two words, the first generally refers to a change in one's behavior, while the second is an act or sign of penance and contrition. Yet in this verse, *emendatio* looks more like the latter and not the former (see note 46.4). For a discussion of these two words in RB, see *RB 1980,* 435. See note 43.6, *satisfactio.*

To judge from the frequent mention of abbatial discretion in regard to food and drink (39.6; 40.5; 41.4-5) in connection with hard work and summer heat, this verse probably also refers to something like that and not a mere whim on the part of the superior. Nor is this verse a mere appendix or afterthought. It speaks of the failure to respond to the grace of the moment; therefore, it forms an inclusion with 43.1-3, where answering the bell for Office is treated in the same way. Basil, *reg.* 96, also reproaches stubborn monks who refuse what they need.

XLIV: DE HIS QUI EXCOMMUNICANTUR, QUOMODO SATISFACIANT

[1]Qui pro gravibus culpis ab oratorio et a mensa excommunicantur, hora qua opus Dei in oratorio percelebratur, ante fores oratorii prostratus iaceat nihil dicens, [2]nisi tantum posito in terra capite, stratus pronus omnium de oratorio exeuntium pedibus; [3]et hoc tamdiu faciat usque dum abbas iudicaverit satisfactum esse. [4]Qui dum iussus ab abbate venerit, volvat se ipsius abbatis deinde omnium vestigiis ut orent pro ipso, [5]et tunc, si iusserit abbas, recipiatur in choro vel in ordine quo abbas decreverit; [6]ita sane ut psalmum aut lectionem vel aliud quid non praesumat in oratorio imponere nisi iterum abbas iubeat; [7]et omnibus horis, dum percompletur opus Dei, proiciat se in terra in loco quo stat, [8]et sic satisfaciat usque dum ei iubeat iterum abbas ut quiescat iam ab hac satisfactione.

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[9]Qui vero pro levibus culpis excommunicantur tantum a mensa, in oratorio satisfaciant usque ad iussionem abbatis; [10]hoc perficiant usque dum benedicat et dicat: Sufficit.

RB 44: HOW THE EXCOMMUNICATED SHOULD MAKE SATISFACTION

1. One who is excommunicated for serious faults from oratory and table should lie prostrate and silent outside the entrance to the oratory at the time when the celebration of the Divine Office is completed. 2. He should simply lie there with his face to the ground and stretched flat at the feet of all as they leave the oratory. 3. And he should do this until the abbot decides enough satisfaction has been made.

4. When he has been bidden by the abbot, he should come and prostrate at the feet of the abbot himself and then of all, that they might pray for him. 5. Then, if the abbot commands it, he should be received back to his place in choir, or to the place decided by the abbot. 6. He should not, however, presume to perform a psalm or lesson or anything else unless again the abbot gives the order. 7. At all the hours, when the Work of God ends, he must prostrate himself on the floor in the place where he is standing. 8. And that is the way he must make satisfaction until the abbot again orders that he cease doing so.

9. As for those who are excommunicated for minor faults from table only, they should make satisfaction in the oratory until the abbot gives the order. 10. Let them keep this up until he blesses them and says: "That is enough."

RB 44 Notes

T

How the excommunicated can make satisfaction (De his qui excommunicantur quomodo satisfaciant), literally, "Of those who are excommunicated, how they can make satisfaction." This title is couched in the popular style of the day (Lentini, 398), and it forms a set with RB 43,45–46, all of which begin with *De his. . . .* Since RB 23–30 only dealt with the excommunication of wrongdoers and not with the method of reconciliation, these chapters form the completion to that "penal code." This title is based on RM 14T: *Quomodo excommunicatus debet paeniteri*. On that basis, I have translated the *satisfaciat* as a jussive subjunctive. RM 14 does not use the word *satisfacere* at all (Vogüé, 2.592). See Mansini, 1; note 43.6, above.

1.

serious faults (gravibus culpis) come first in this chapter (see 44.9-10 for light faults) but they come second in RB 24–25. The regular punishment for grave faults is exclusion from both oratory and table.

one (qui) is actually plural, but since the Latin switches to the singular for the main verb, it is maintained throughout the translation.

silent (nihil dicens). In contrast, the penitent in RM 14.3-19 is to cry out with a prayer of petition during the silent pause between the psalms. Benedict has dropped this long prayer and others that clot the penal code of RM. Moreover, the penitent in RM is to lie prostrate during the entire Office and not just at its completion as most commentators understand RB 44.1. Yet it is possible that by *percelebratur* Benedict does not mean "finish celebrating" but rather "during the whole celebration" (Schmitz; Blaise, s.v.). See *Index:* Silence.

lie prostrate (prostratus jaceat). Cassian, *inst.* 2.16 and 4.16,1, describes penitential prostrations in Egypt. To lie face down on the ground is a universal sign of submission to a higher authority. See *Index:* Prostration.

oratory is actually mentioned three times in this one sentence, but the third mention has been omitted from the translation.

outside the entrance to the oratory (ante fores oratorii). This arrangement mirrors the early Christian practice of requiring the public penitents to stand at the entrance of the church for all to see. But the early Christian penitential discipline was fading away in Benedict's time, so he may have had difficulty maintaining it in his community. Therefore, he invokes the abbot's authority over and over again in this chapter. See Holzherr, 227.

2.

simply (nisi tantum), literally, "unless only" but no verb follows. These terms make sense only if Benedict is consciously eliminating the verbosity of the long prayers in the Master's ritual. He seems to do that by emphasizing the mute physicality of the gesture.

stretched flat (stratus pronus). This strong expression, plus the mention of the head (face) on the ground and the feet of the procession of monks, lends an extremely graphic quality to this phrase. Perhaps the text has been altered, since *pedibus* (feet) is far from *stratus pronus* on which it depends.

Lentini, 399, thinks that the mention of those leaving the oratory proves that the prostration only took place at the end of the Office. He sees that as another sign of Benedict's moderation vis-à-vis the Master.

3.

enough satisfaction has been made (satisfactum esse). Since Benedict has greatly simplified the Master's mass of detail at this point, one hesitates to expand the language. Yet "it is enough" does not seem to be enough: the abbot has decided that the penitent has satisfied the first ritual requirement of the process of reconciliation. Of course, that implies that the inner conversion of the individual has at least begun. See note 43.6.

4.

come (venerit). Though the text does not say so, it seems likely that he comes into the oratory, where they pray for him. In RM 14.20-26 we find an elaborate description of the ritual at the door of the oratory. The cries of the penitent virtually drive the abbot and community back into the chapel. One gets the impression that this scene is merely a formality, since the Master wishes to complete the penitential process and the reconciliation as quickly as possible (within three days: RM 13.68). In comparison, Benedict is much more deliberate and measured in his approach. See Kardong, 3.46.

feet of the abbot (ipsius abbatis . . . vestigiis). This second mention of the abbot in one sentence is stylistically inelegant, but it does reinforce the idea that the abbot and he alone is the master of the reconciliation process, which is clearly dependent on his pastoral love and skill.

5.

if the abbot commands it (si jusserit abbas). This is a real condition and not to be taken for granted. The abbot is fully in command of the reconciliation process and must see that it is not hurried or perfunctory. As is the previous sentence, the abbot is mentioned twice.

or to the place (vel in ordine suo). If *vel* here is taken as a true alternative, then it implies that "to his place" should be read into the first member of the sentence. But if *vel* is very weak, then it is merely an explanation: "into choir, to the place. . . ." In a hierarchical system, the displacement of a person from "his or her place," whether in choir or table or anywhere else, is a serious matter, since the individual's sense of identity depends so much on that place. See note 43.4 and all of RB 63. It is interesting that there is no imposition of hands or any other familiar liturgical sign of reconciliation; the resumption of one's place is a powerful cenobitic sign (Holzherr, 230). See *Index:* Rank.

6.

perform (imponere) must refer to a solo performance of some part of the Office for it would not make much sense to admit the monk to

choir if he could not participate in the common singing. Of course, one person read the lessons, but in the early days of monasticism the psalms were often read or sung by a soloist as well. See Dyer, 41–74; see also note 24.4.

unless again the abbot orders it (nisi iterum abbas jubeat). In virtually every verse of this chapter the abbatial discretion and control is invoked. The motif may seem overdone, but it is calculated to make a good point: there is to be no quick solution to the problem. Premature solutions merely retard true healing and the monastic physician should monitor the process carefully along the way.

7.

prostrate himself on the floor in the place where he stands (in terra in loco quo stat). Benedict may seem to need a lot of words when he is describing prostration (see note 44.2), but the detail about doing so in the choir itself is necessary to distinguish it from prostration at the door.

when the Work of God ends (dum percompletur Opus Dei). Strictly speaking, this *dum* clause could describe a continuing action: "as the Work of God is being completed" *(RB 1980).* Still, *dum* is often used imprecisely and it seems more likely that one prostrates as the others are leaving choir. Another instance where *dum* equals *cum* is 44.4, where the case is more clear-cut. This is not a requirement made by the Master or Cassian.

cease doing so (ut quiescat iam de hac satisfactione). By this time the reader is probably wearying a bit of this long, rather meticulous process. That may be part of Benedict's literary technique, for he seems to want to emphasize the thoroughness of the process. At any rate, anyone who finds this chapter slow-moving should compare it to RM 14 with its endless speeches and picayune details. With the reintroduction into choir, the monk has been pardoned, but to insure the conversion he continues to make satisfaction (Holzherr, 230). This distinction between pardon and satisfaction mirrors that of the great Church, which assumes the same distinction in some of her doctrines such as that of purgatory. See Mansini, 1; note 43.6 above.

9.

make satisfaction (satisfaciant). Probably this satisfaction consists in the prostration described in vv. 7-8 (Lentini, 402). RM 13.60-61 requires a different gesture: head down upon the knees.

until the abbot gives the order (usque ad jussionem abbatis). Some commentators interpret this as "as long as the abbot orders" (Manning, Steidle, *RB 1980*). Since the next sentence says virtually the same thing,

some authors place the period after "make satisfaction" (Schmitz, Morin, Butler).

10.
"That is enough" (Sufficit). This single Latin word takes on its full force only when it is compared with the stilted and verbose speeches supplied in RM 13–14 for both the culprit and the abbot in the reconciliation process.

XLV: DE HIS QUI FALLUNTUR IN ORATORIO

[1]Si quis dum pronuntiat psalmum, responsorium, antiphonam vel lectionem fallitus fuerit, nisi satisfactione ibi coram omnibus humiliatus fuerit, maiori vindictae subiaceat, [2]quippe qui noluit humilitate corrigere quod neglegentia deliquit. [3]Infantes autem pro tali culpa vapulent.

RB 45: THOSE WHO MAKE MISTAKES IN THE ORATORY

1. If someone makes a mistake when chanting a psalm, response, antiphon or lesson, unless he makes humble satisfaction right then and there before all, he should suffer a more severe punishment. 2. For he has refused to humbly correct the fault he committed through negligence. 3. Children, however, should be beaten for such a fault.

RB 45 Notes

T
This title matches the titles of RB 43–44 and 46, all of which begin *De his*. *Fallere* (to make a mistake) is not found elsewhere in RB. As in RB 46, which deals with errors and mistakes made elsewhere (but calls them *delicta*), these mistakes in the Divine Office are simple human errors. Nevertheless, no doubt due to the solemnity of the situation (see RB 19–20), they must be instantly atoned by ritual penance. See *Index:* Fault.

1.
Lentini, 403, comments on the need for ritual penances during the performance of cultic acts, saying that by this means people are motivated to a careful, exact performance of the liturgy. Although the precise form of the penance is not mentioned, he thinks it was probably the prostration used for minor faults (44.9-10). The difficulty is that

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such a prostration is exceedingly distracting to the other choir members. Most modern monasteries employ a simple sign such as touching the bench and then the lips with the fingers.

While it is understandable to want a careful and dignified liturgical performance, it is still questionable that such can be insured by public penances. Experience shows that a certain type of pharisaism flourishes in this kind of milieu, glorying in intricate and arcane rubrics; catching others off-guard; producing all kinds of liturgical tension. None of this is appropriate to what is supposed to be the calm and serene praise of God. It is far more effective to slow the liturgy down and keep it simple. Then liturgical "mistakes" will be at a minimum.

The topic of cultic mistakes was of concern from the beginnings of organized monasticism. Pachomius, *pr.* 14, chides those who err in choir from negligence. Cassian, *inst.* 4.16,1, describes these as minor faults to be atoned on the spot. He also calls for humility on the part of those erring in this way (*inst.* 3.7,1). See Vogüé, 2.595.

humble (humiliatus fuerit). In place of the more usual *se humiliaverit,* we find this periphrastic construction. The meaning, however, is not "is humiliated," but rather the reflexive: "humbles himself." Perhaps the verb form *fallitus fuerit* in the preceding clause has influenced this verb.

chanting (pronuntiat). Probably the reference here is to solo performance, which often extended to the psalms in the ancient Office (see Dyer, 41–74).

2.

the fault he committed through negligence (neglegentia delinquit). Although there was no mention of negligence up to this point, now the author describes the liturgical errors this way. It could be that refusal to make satisfaction causes him to see the errors in a new light. In fact, nowhere in the penal legislation of Benedict (RB 23–30; 43–46) do we find mention of specific faults; the only fault Benedict actually punishes is the refusal to admit that one is at fault and the refusal to make suitable amends (see notes on RB 23). See *Index:* Fault.

3.

beaten (vapulent). It is hard to believe that Benedict wishes children to be publicly beaten during the liturgy. While it is true that he sees corporal punishment as suitable to those who cannot understand excommunication (RB 30), it seems unreasonable to use such a punishment for minor liturgical faults. Probably the reference here is to those who refuse to admit their faults and do penance for them.

fault (culpa). This is the third term used for "fault" in this little chapter *(fallor, delinquo)*. Although all these terms are somewhat fluid, one gets the impression that the author uses them in an ascending order of blame: *fallor, delinquo, culpa*. The logic of that progression lies in fact that the discussion moves over from inadvertent error to bad intention, namely, refusal to atone. See *Index:* Fault.

XLVI: DE HIS QUI IN ALIIS QUIBUSLIBET REBUS DELINQUUNT

[1]Si quis dum in labore quovis, in coquina, in cellario, in ministerio, in pistrino, in horto, in arte aliqua dum laborat, vel in quocumque loco, aliquid deliquerit, [2]aut fregerit quippiam aut perdiderit, vel aliud quid excesserit ubiubi, [3]et non veniens continuo ante abbatem vel congregationem ipse ultro satisfecerit et prodiderit delictum suum, [4]dum per alium cognitum fuerit, maiori subiaceat emendationi.

[5]Si animae vero peccati causa fuerit latens, tantum abbati aut spiritalibus senioribus patefaciat, [6]qui sciat curare et sua et aliena vulnera, non detegere et publicare.

RB 46: THOSE WHO ERR IN SOME OTHER WAY

1. If someone is working in the kitchen, the cellar, in serving, in the bakery, the garden or at any craft or any other place—and if he commits some mistake, 2. or breaks or loses something, or errs in any other way in any place, and if he does not come immediately before the abbot and community to confess his fault spontaneously and make satisfaction, 4. when it is found out through someone else, he shall undergo a more severe penalty.

5. If, however, it is a question of a hidden problem of conscience, he should only reveal it to the abbot or one of the spiritual seniors. 6. For they know how to cure their own wounds and those of others, without divulging them in public.

RB 46 Notes

T

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verses form a perfect counterpart to RB 45, since they cover every place except the oratory. Verses 5-6 constitute a development of the theme of free avowal of faults.

1.

the kitchen, the cellar, in serving, in the bakery, garden or at any craft (in coquina, in cellario, in ministerio, in pistrino, in horto, in arte aliqua). A similar list is found in 7.63, but the only word the two lists have in common is "garden" *(horto).*

in serving (ministerio). Some mss have *monasterio,* probably in imitation of 7.63. The temptation is to limit this word to place, since most of the list consists of those kinds of words. But the existence of *in arte* (at any craft) makes one think that this is a heterogeneous list that should not be standardized. If there is a reference to place in *ministerio,* it might be the refectory (35.10; 38.6).

is working (in labore quovis . . . dum laborat), literally, "If someone is working at some work." Throughout this chapter the translator is left with the choice of rendering faithfully a luxuriant, overgrown text or simplifying it in the cause of clarity and order.

or any other place (in quocumque loco) probably means that any fault whatsoever, whether work-related or not, is to be reported.

2.

or breaks or loses something (aut fregerit quippiam aut perdiderit). As in RB 45, it seems that what is under discussion here is not so much moral faults as errors of judgment, inadvertence or perhaps negligence. These are the kind of things that happen all the time because of human fallibility. The Rule is not inculcating perfectionism but rather the spirit of open avowal of mistakes and transgressions. By not making a sharp distinction between intentional and unintentional faults, Benedict risks falling into a taboo mentality. On the other hand, it is often difficult to distinguish the difference, whether in case of oneself or another. Hence, it is better to confess the mistake and accept the penance.

or errs in any other way in any place (aliud quid excesserit ubiubi). In certain passages of RB, the author lapses into a paroxysm of frantic concern to close up all possible loopholes to his legislation. Another example is 71.6-9, where the topic is the same, that is, the reluctance of a monk to admit his fault and make humble satisfaction. It is clear that Benedict is grinding an axe in 46.2, for he does not even bother to state the basic principle. Rather, he leaps immediately to the possible violation of that implied principle. As is his wont, Lentini, 408, defends the author of the Rule from any lapse of style or good sense, noting that it

is always good to be as careful as possible in any work that one is doing in the monastery. True enough, but that does not mitigate the harsh tone of this chapter.

4.

Although this sentence is far too long for the comfort of the modern reader of English, it has been left unbroken in order to show that Benedict is only dealing here with the violation of the principle of self-avowal. By converting v. 3 into the main clause and a command, *RB 1980* obscures this meaning.

Vogüé, 2.595, considers Augustine, *ep.* 211.11 (*reg. serv.* 4.11) to be the certain source of this verse because it also uses the words *ultro* (spontaneously) and *emendatio* ("correction": a rare meaning, see Vogüé, 5.825). It could also be the source of Benedict's near fanaticism in this chapter, for Augustine waxes wroth over the problem of monks receiving unauthorized mail: "If someone has progressed so far in evil that he secretly receives a letter or gifts from a woman, he should be pardoned and prayers should be said for him if he confesses it on his own; but if he is caught in the act, he should be punished more severely according to the priest or the superior."

immediately (continuo). Obviously, one cannot come before the abbot and community at just any time; one must wait for an opportune time, but not a time convenient to oneself.

through someone else (per alium) that is, someone has reported it to the authorities. Perhaps this verse is the origin of the famous *culpa* of faults, where monks confessed their own faults and sometimes the faults of others. There is a fine line between reporting a problem for the good of the offender and the community, and the noxious habit of "informing." Nevertheless, in Benedict's world someone who is causing harm should be open to correction from any source (see RB 71–72). At least twice the Master mentions the delation of others for faults (RM 17.7; 30.29).

penalty (emendationi). The usual meaning of *emendatio* seems to be "personal improvement," yet the word can also mean "amends" in the sense of a deed of satisfaction (43.19) and in this verse it means a correction applied by the superior. See note 43.19 and remarks on Augustine earlier in this note.

5.

The theme of the confession of secret faults and sins to a discrete elder was very common in the ancient monastic tradition. In the master/disciple relation of the Egyptian desert, it was taken for granted. Thus *vit. patr.* 5.5,4 and 5.10,85 are listed by Vogüé and *RB 1980* as possible

influences on 46.5-6. Cassian also advocates this practice (*inst.* 4.9), but warns that not all elders are discrete enough to qualify for the role (*conf.* 2.13). This is not the only time Benedict recommends this practice: in 4.50 he speaks of avowal to a spiritual senior; and in 7.44, he tells the monk to make known his secret faults to the abbot. See Vogüé, 2.596.

hidden problem of conscience (animae . . . peccati causa . . . latens) is not easy to translate. The difficulty lies in what seems to be a superfluity of words: literally, "the cause of the soul's sin lies hidden." Perhaps the key to the problem is *causa:* is it to be understood here as a true "cause" in the medical sense? Lentini, 411, claims that the term could simply mean "illness" in Late Latin. I have understood it in a non-causal sense, by "it is a question of." Vogüé has "a sin of the soul the matter of which remains hidden." Perhaps Benedict is talking about interior temptations such as the "thoughts" so often discussed in Eastern monasticism. See *Index:* Thought. It is clear enough that the problem is interior rather than external behavior; or at least it is not known to the community, nor has it impinged directly upon them.

problem (peccatum) is probably not to be taken in a strictly theological sense (sin), for then it would be a question of the sacrament of penance. But that does not seem to be the case here. Benedict wrote at a period before the development of private confession of sins. He probably still thought along the same lines as Basil, *reg.* 200, who considered the qualification for the healing of "private" sins to be knowledge of souls rather than any official status.

or one of the spiritual seniors (aut spiritalibus senioribus). Despite the fact that he gives the abbot tremendous authority in the community, Benedict does not make him the sole competent authority in things of the spirit. For one thing, this could cause serious problems for a given individual who does not find a given abbot accessible or helpful in personal matters. We must remember that Benedictine cenobitism is not desert anchoritism. In the latter system, one chose an attractive and inspiring master suited to further one's own personal development. If, however, this master proved less than helpful, one was free to depart. In the cenobitic system, though, abbots succeed one another and the individual cannot hope to find each abbot ideally suited to his personal needs. Therefore, there must be some freedom to choose another spiritual confidant. This does not eliminate the abbot as the spiritual father of each monk: he must have a pastoral concern for each one. Nor does it make the spiritual confidant the superior of the monk.

Probably the term "spiritual senior" is meant to distinguish a superior rank in the communal order (see RB 63) from the gifts necessary

for fruitful counseling and discernment. Regarding the latter, the youngest monk or the latest newcomer to the community may be the best endowed person. To judge from the qualifications demanded of them in 21.4 ("merit of life and wisdom of teaching"), the deans would seem to make ideal spiritual seniors.

6.

they know (sciat). The singular number of this verb is surprising, but still explicable. Some commentators (Linderbauer, 327; Vogüé, 5.830) suggest that the original text did not mention "spiritual seniors" at all; therefore this singular verb simply refers to the abbot. But such an explanation is not necessary, for a deeply personal avowal would only be made to an individual, not a group. Hence the singular.

cure their own wounds and those of others (curare et sua et aliena vulnera). The vocabulary is medical like that used in RB 28. In speaking realistically of the "wounds" of spiritual directors and superiors, Benedict diverges sharply from the Master, who rarely ever admits that the abbot could have personal faults and problems. On spiritual elitism, see Kardong, 3.37. Furthermore, it is questionable how a perfect counselor could empathize with the sufferings of sinners. Moreover, modern psychiatry is well aware that the totally aloof, nonjudgmental therapist may in fact form a subtle threat to the patient, simply by offering no sign of personal involvement in the problem. Still, it must be admitted that texts like RM 15.1-7 do present an inspiring picture of a community where there is openness and willingness to confront personal problems. There the whole community is involved in prayer-support of the suffering individual. See Holzherr, 233. See *Index:* Care.

without divulging them in public (non detegere et publicare). See Bonhoeffer, 110, who writes tellingly of the tendency of Christian communities to pretend that the members are sinless. When someone is suddenly exposed in his sin, there is a false sense of scandal—as if the rest are immaculate. Where there is continual spiritual work going on, that is, where people are struggling together honestly with their personal problems, no one should be surprised when sin rears its ugly head, which it is always just below the surface.

RB 43–46 Overview

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RB 43–46 Overview

This bloc of chapters has common titles (see note 43T) and common content dealing with faults and their correction. Vogüé labels it "satisfaction," but there is also discussion of specific faults. What is noteworthy is the fact that this body of material is separated by a good

distance from Benedict's "penal code," namely, RB 23–30. Reasons for this split may be formal or substantive. According to Vogüé, 5.789-794, when Benedict removed the liturgical material from the Master's schema (presumably to move it ahead and give it more prominence, see RB 8–20 Overview), he filled in the gap with this material on satisfaction for faults. Whatever his motive, the effect of separating fault and excommunication from reconciliation is to create considerable tension. Benedict may want to do this to show how far one should pursue the conversion of the recalcitrant (RB 27–28), and he may also want to indicate that there should be no premature solution to these problems (see notes 44.4 and 6).

A. RB 43: Tardiness as Lack of Commitment

On the surface of it, RB 43 does not promise to be a key chapter. The problem of tardiness does not seem to be terribly important in a world of much more serious difficulties. But a close examination of Benedict's chapter shows significant differences from the antecedent tradition and especially the Rule of the Master, because Benedict has a different point to make. See Kardong, 9, passim.

In a general way, Benedict models his chapter on RM 73, which also discusses tardiness at choir and table. In vv. 12-19, the Master presents one of his typical detailed discussions of the varying degrees of culpability involved in tardiness to choir. Benedict drops this casuistry entirely, which has the effect of greatly simplifying his treatment, but also eliminating the question of intention. This leaves him open to the charge of a certain taboo mentality which also seems to prevail in RB 46.1-4 (see note 43.6).

But Benedict's treatment of this question differs from the Master in its very purpose. Vogüé, 5.795-800, suggests that the source of RB 43.1-3 really is RM 54.1-2 and not Cassian's earlier treatment in *inst.* 4.12. Whereas Cassian makes alacrity to common prayer a matter of obedience, the Master makes it an exercise of the virtue of religion. To put it another way, Cassian's monk gladly turns from private concerns (even contemplation) to the public welfare, while the Master sees it as a movement from secular work to sacred prayer. While agreeing with his analysis of these two writers on this point, I disagree with Vogüé in aligning Benedict with the Master. He bases his argument on the emphasis of both RM and RB on *gravitas* (seriousness), but I think there are better reasons for placing Benedict with Cassian and not the Master.

The most important reason lies with the great stress Benedict places on response to the signal for choir. This theme is evoked in both vv. 1 and 19 (see notes), forming a real, if not a verbal, inclusion or frame.

Along these same lines, it is important to interpret 43.3 (see note), "Nothing is to be preferred to the work of God" in strict connection to what precedes, namely, the need to respond to the call of God *at the moment*. In studying RB 5 (see notes for 5.7-9), we also noted the strong theme of ready response to the will of God mediated through the superior and the community. Apart from that, RB 5 would remain a crushingly autocratic statement. Here in RB 43, the mistake would be to emphasize split-second efficiency rather than generous spontaneity. See *Index:* Alacrity.

To deny that Benedict's main motivation in this chapter is liturgical does not require that we altogether discount that factor. In fact, he seems to value the performance of the Office even more than the Master, for the latter is quick to bar latecomers from choir whereas Benedict is very reluctant to do so. Benedict knows he is resisting the entire monastic tradition in this matter, so he explains his reasons at great length. See notes 43.4,7.

Perhaps the deepest difference between Benedict's treatment of these questions and that of the Master lies in their understanding of community. For Benedict, the total gift of oneself to the group is not unrequited, for in return one receives a "place" in the communal order (see RB 63). The Master lacks that concept entirely; nowhere does he show any inclination to grant each member of the community a special "place." Therefore, he blithely expels monks from choir and table without much sense of what this displacement will cost the individual. Benedict, on the other hand, clearly realizes that the loss of place is a severe deprivation to the member of a hierarchical society. Indeed, that pain is the very basis of the penalty (see note). See notes 43.4 and 44.5.

This same sense of the strong bonds of communal life comes through in Benedict's treatment of tardiness at table. For him, the reason this fault cannot be tolerated is the deleterious effect it has on the conduct of the community meal. Now, for Benedict, that meal is a primary symbol of the very life of the community, so nothing can be tolerated that will undermine it (see notes 43.13,17). In contrast, the Master can only offer a bit of strange spiritual reasoning: whoever refuses to speak to God (pray) should not receive a word from any man (table reading?) during the meal (RM 73.10-11).

B. RB 44: The Slow Process of Healing

A glance at RB 44 immediately links it with the material on penalties in RB 23–26. Here again there is a division into major and minor levels of punishment, namely, excommunication or exclusion from the common life. Although RB 44 takes up the greater penalty (exclusion from

choir and table) first, while RB 25 takes it up second, the nature of the penalties is identical. As we have noted, RB 44 is clearly the completion of the earlier material, even though it occurs much later in the document. Now, however, it is time to speak of the reintegration of the person into the community. Now it is time for reconciliation.

This process is symbolized by a rather elaborate ritual carried out at the oratory. First, one prostrates silently outside as the community makes its exit after the Divine Office. Then this prostration is carried out at the feet of each monk, presumably inside the oratory. Next, the penitent is allowed to participate in choir, but not to function as a prayer-leader. Finally, the penitent is to prostrate in his place as the community leaves the oratory. When that has gone on long enough, the abbot says: "Enough!"

In order to gain some purchase on the significance of this ritual, we must compare it to the literary models Benedict was using. Both John Cassian and the Master have a similar ritual program, but Benedict has made considerable changes in his version of that program. On the one hand he has enlarged it, but at the same time he has brought about a notable simplification. The amplification consists in the extension of the process by the addition of a number of "steps" (Lentini, 399–403). Whether Benedict thought of his program in this systematic fashion or not, he certainly has added to its length and complexity. As for Cassian and the Master, they have only steps one and two: prostration outside the door and then at the feet of the abbot and community. Benedict tacks on the two requirements of no leadership in the Office and *in situ* prostration.

In addition to this rather long and exhausting series of requirements, Benedict has introduced another element that has something of the same quality: he makes each step completely dependent on the judgment and control of the abbot. No less than nine times in this chapter of ten verses is it insisted that the abbot must monitor the process of reconciliation. The constant repetition of such a point cannot but wear down the reader and perhaps create the impression that Benedict is insisting a bit too much. Ordinarily, this could be interpreted as a sign of defensiveness, and there may be some element of that involved here. Perhaps there was some form of challenge to the abbatial role as minister of reconciliation of penitents.

But it is possible to read this material in a different way. If this process and its description drags on and on, it may well be because Benedict wants to emphasize that reconciliation takes time and cannot be rushed. If we are talking about genuine healing, then it is a truism to say that any attempt to force premature closure will have just the opposite effect. And if this healing means the deep conversion of the

penitent, then only a skilled spiritual counselor can monitor that process. This is how Benedict sees the abbot. See notes 44.1,3,5,6 and 7.

In order to appreciate the positive value of Benedict's lengthy ritual of reconciliation, it is only necessary to compare the analogous process in the RM 14. Even though that chapter is much longer than RB 44, in fact it is mostly made up of lengthy set-speeches to be used by the abbot and the penitent at prescribed points in the ritual. Once these speeches are removed, there is little left of RM 14. In fact, the Master is in an obvious rush to get the business over and done with. One gets the distinct impression that he has no patience whatever with the long, halting process of genuine healing.

By eliminating the artificial speeches from the ritual, Benedict has accomplished a major improvement. Of all the verbal excesses perpetrated by the Master, these speeches are perhaps the worst. Not only do they ring completely false on the lips of all parties, but they are a compound of pious artificiality and the trivialization of Scripture. In comparison, Benedict's silent prostration (44.2) and his terse remark "That is enough" (44.10) seem to be full of power and exactly suited to the occasion. See Kardong, 20.41-45.

C. RB 45: From Mistake to Fault

With its three verses, RB 45 is a mere whisp of a chapter. Nevertheless, it does present at least one interesting development that sheds some light on Benedict's method and mentality. The topic is mistakes in choir, for which Benedict demands immediate satisfaction by means of some ritual, probably prostration (see note 45.1). This treatment of ritual errors is not at all new with Benedict; in fact, it is found in most of the earlier Rules, including RM 16.41 and 17.8 (see note 45.1).

What is noticeable in this chapter, however, is a certain escalation of terminology. Whereas the discussion starts by talking about "mistakes" (*fallor:* T, v. 1), as the author goes along he begins to talk as if these mistakes are the result of bad will. Thus in 45.2 he speaks of "the fault he committed through negligence" *(neglegentia deliquit).* By the final verse, children are whipped for *culpa,* that is, morally reprehensible faults.

Of course, there is a perfectly understandable reason why the language changes in this chapter, for the author moves from description of the error to refusal to acknowledge the error. That recalcitrance is the real "fault" involved. And indeed such contumacy is the only real fault that Benedict ever punishes (see notes on RB 23). But the effect here is to make it sound as if all such errors were rooted in bad will, which is manifestly not the case. Indeed, the whole question of liturgical faults and their correction is somewhat vexing. On the one hand,

no one wants a slovenly and undisciplined liturgy. Yet the question remains as to how to achieve that goal without introducing disciplinary measures alien to the very spirit of the liturgy itself. In response to Vatican II, which calls for a much more humane approach to liturgy, most Benedictine communities have distanced themselves from the rather draconian measures suggested by RB 45. And this has been done without any noticeable sign of deterioration, at least in the Divine Office. See notes 45.2,3.

D. RB 46: From the Ridiculous to the Sublime

In this last chapter of the penal code, Benedict manages to both plumb the depths and scale the heights of his achievement in the Holy Rule. There could hardly be a sharper contrast between the spirit exhibited in vv. 1-4 and that of 5-6, the former totally lacking the broadmindedness and humanity of the latter.

RB 46.1-4 seems to be the counterpart of RB 45 in that it treats of whatever the previous chapter left out. That, of course, includes almost everything, since RB 45 is only about faults in the Divine Office. Therefore, RB 46 means to fill up the gap by insisting that faults committed everywhere else absolutely must be confessed. In order to make this point, Benedict launches into a tirade aimed at closing off every possible loophole.

This is accomplished by producing a long list of possible places where faults could be committed, which may be useful as an inventory of the rooms of an ancient monastery, but which also produces tedium in the reader (see note for 7.63, which is a similar list). There is also a lavish use of indefinite adverbs and adjectives (someone, any, any other, any other way, and so on), much as in RB 71.6-9, a similar diatribe (see Kardong, 24.3-16). The impression is that of a writer out of control, or someone indulging in a tantrum.

Another factor that contributes to the rather fanatical tone of these verses is that without even stating the principle of self-avowal of public faults, the author jumps immediately to the suspicion that monks will violate that principle. This leads him to the case where someone does not do so and is delated by another, which calls for a "more severe penalty" (see notes 46.1,2).

But Benedict fails to mention that the rule of self-avowal is in fact a new one that he has introduced into the monastic tradition where it hardly existed before. He has not derived it from Cassian or the Master, who never teach it. Rather, he gets it from Augustine (*reg. serv.* 2.11-117), who only invokes it for a very serious case and not as a blanket rule. It could be that Benedict is defensive here precisely because

he is introducing something that goes beyond the tradition (see Vogüé, 5.824-826).

Someone might object that the whole practice of spiritual direction in the desert was built upon self-avowal. Even though that tradition does look similar, it was in fact quite different for the desert disciple did not "confess" faults to his abba. Rather, he disclosed *all* his thoughts, good or bad, for discernment. See Hausherr, 1.

To say this, of course, is to accuse Benedict of a certain rigorism and that is a charge that is not often made against him. It is much more typical to compare him favorably against the rigorism of the Master. To prove that, consult almost any work by the present writer. Yet, it should be admitted candidly that Benedict can become quite furious in the face of what he perceives to be a challenge to monastic authority (see esp. RB 65). It also has to be said that he is fascinated by penalties of all sorts. His penal code is longer than that of the Master and he ends many, many chapters with a threat of punishment. See Vogüé, 5.837-844.

Nevertheless, Benedict still rescues RB 46 from ending on the sour note with which it began. He slips quite unexpectedly into a comment about the need to reveal one's inner faults to a qualified spiritual master. What makes this teaching so attractive, at least to the modern sensibility, is the remark that the abbot or a "spiritual senior" should know how to heal their own wounds and those of others without publishing them to the world. RB 46.5-6 is clearly based on Cassian, *conf.* 2.13, a delightful story about an elder who cannot not face his own wounds, and who egregiously violates pastoral charity in his treatment of a young monk who is having trouble with chastity. The old fool's punishment is to fall into the complete domination of the demon of lust, which sends him racing into town to complete his disgrace.

It is not quite clear what kind of inner faults Benedict means in his last two verses. If he is following Cassian closely, then they are temptations rather than actual sins. But it seems that the emphasis is on the private versus the public rather than on the exact nature of the fault. Certainly RM 15, which is another similar text, describes much more public process than what Benedict proposes.

In closing, it should be noted that these two verses are very important for the question of the whole nature of Benedictine authority. By sharing the spiritual authority of the abbot with "spiritual seniors," Benedict significantly broadens that authority in the community. As much as he talks about deans (RM 11), the Master nowhere actually gives them any spiritual authority. In 46.5-6, Benedict seems to do just that (but see note 46.5 for the limits of that authority).

XLVII: DE SIGNIFICANDA HORA OPERIS DEI

[1]Nuntianda hora operis Dei dies noctesque sit cura abbatis: aut ipse nuntiare aut tali sollicito fratri iniungat hanc curam, ut omnia horis competentibus compleantur.

[2]Psalmos autem vel antiphonas post abbatem ordine suo quibus iussum fuerit imponant. [3]Cantare autem et legere non praesumat nisi qui potest ipsud officium implere ut aedificentur audientes; [4]quod cum humilitate et gravitate et tremore fiat, et cui iusserit abbas.

RB 47: THE SIGNAL FOR THE WORK OF GOD

1. It is the abbot's responsibility to signal the time for the Work of God, both during the day and the night. He should either give the signal himself or entrust the work to a careful brother. That way, everything will be done at the right time.

2. Those who have been ordered to do so should lead the psalms and antiphons in their order after the abbot. 3. As regards singing and reading, no one should presume to carry out these functions unless he is capable of edifying the listeners. 4. Let that be done with humility, sobriety and reverence, by the one designated by the abbot.

RB 47 Notes

This little chapter is somewhat fragmentary, but it fits in well enough with its surroundings: RB 43–45 were devoted to the discipline of the Divine Office and RB 48 is about the horarium. Only 47.1 deals specifically with the signal for the Office, the remaining two verses covering other aspects of the choir prayer. 47.2-3 seem to be repetitive, since their contents are also found in other places in the Rule (24.4; 38.1). The core of the material is drawn from RM 31 and 46, that is, the first and last chapters on the liturgy. Benedict has moved the bulk of the liturgical material to RB 8–20, and compressed the detailed directives of RM 31 and 46 into a tiny, somewhat disconnected chapter. See Holzherr, 382.

T

the Work of God (operis Dei) is one of the best-known titles for the Divine Office in the Rule, but surprisingly it is never used in the main liturgical section of RB 8–20 (see note 16T). See *Index:* Work of God.

1.

the abbot's responsibility (cura abbatis). To our minds, the menial task of giving the signal for the Divine Office would seem to fall below the level

of the chief executive officer. Yet this prescription shows how much importance Benedict placed on the Office. It must also be remembered that computing the correct times for these Offices was not so simple in the days before mechanical clocks. It was especially difficult for the night Office of Vigils. See Stock, 31–38. The Master (RM 31) appoints two "vigilant cocks" to signal the hours; one of them is to stay awake all night and wake the abbot first for the Night Office. See *Index:* Care.

announce (nuntianda) is a variant of *significanda,* which is used in the title. Probably it refers to some kind of mechanical signal such as the striking of a gong or wooden clapper. Lentini, 415, claims that the rod traditionally pictured in the hand of St. Benedict does not refer to punishment but to the signal for the Office. In modern times, some monastic communities have abolished the bells that signal the various exercises on the grounds that they inhibit personal responsibility. On the other hand, one could argue just as well that the deep significance of the signal is that it frees one from "keeping time," so that one can *respond* to the call of the Lord. See note 43.1 and Kardong, 9.117.

He may do so personally (aut ipse nuntiare) does not fit into the grammar of the sentence (Vogüé, 2.597). Perhaps it has been added by a later author who failed to provide the correct syntax (present subjunctive). If this clause is removed, the sentence still makes good sense.

done at the right time (horis competentibus). Although I would argue that Benedict is not so concerned about punctuality as he is about prompt response, nevertheless he does greatly appreciate the proper ordering of things. RB 48 will give that order in some detail, but it should be noted that Benedict does not think it is a fixed and rigid thing pertaining to all monasteries in all places at all times. Rather, he advocates an order carefully tailored to the needs of the community. See Kardong, 25.93-104.

careful (sollicito) is frequent in the Rule, but it usually refers to a care for persons. Here in RB 47, it seems to apply to diligence for "things," but the ultimate purpose of a careful horarium is to provide an orderly, peaceful atmosphere where persons can flourish. In earlier Latin parlance, *sollicitus* almost always was pejorative ("fussy"), but for Benedict it is not. A good alternative to "careful" here would be "punctual," (*RB 1980,* Steidle, Rochais, Schmitz). See *Index:* Care.

2.

lead the psalms or antiphons (Psalmos vel antephonas . . . imponant) could refer to the mere intonation of the prayer or the solo performance of the same. According to Dyer, 41–74, most of the parts of the

Night Office were sung by a soloist. See note 24.4. Because singing and reading are mentioned explicitly in the next verse, Lentini, 417, thinks that *imponant* only refers to initial intonation. Vogüé, 2.545, thinks that it refers to the performance of whole psalms and readings.

in their order after the abbot (post abbatem ordine suo) no doubt refers to the rank of the brothers established by RB 63. If I read him rightly, Steidle, 143, thinks that every psalm and antiphon is begun by the abbot but continued by designated brothers. Most translations indicate that the abbot is the first in a series and not the first in each case.

3.

edify the hearers (ut aedificentur audientes) must indicate a pleasing and intelligible performance. Thus the qualification for this task is not moral or spiritual perfection, but the talent of singing and reading well. It is desirable to have all members of the choir carry out special roles, but only in so far as they have the gifts required to do so properly. Edification is not just a pious notion, but the building up of practical charity among the members of the community (see note 38.12). See *Index:* Edification.

Those who have been ordered to do so (quibus jussum fuerit). Because not everyone is capable of reading a lesson or singing a psalm solo, especially given the low literacy of the time and the difficulty of reading ancient manuscripts, only those specially designated are to carry out this function. If *imponant* refers to mere intonation, then perhaps this is a reference to excommunication; but if it refers to solo psalmody and reading, then it would be a case of specially designated liturgical performers.

presume (praesumat) is a favorite word of Benedict which usually denotes the usurpation of authority by someone to whom it does not belong. Its use here is curious, though, since the monk would hardly have appointed himself to sing or read at the Office; and if he was appointed, he would have to do the best he could with the talent he had. Yet it could apply to the question of preparation, for to neglect that duty would be an act of presumption. Since ancient manuscripts were hard to read, due to lack of punctuation, one had to know the text virtually by heart to give an edifying performance. See *Index:* Presumption.

4.

with humility, sobriety and reverence (cum humilitate et gravitate et tremore). This trio of qualities, which is found also in 68.3, lends a good deal of weight to the chapter. RB 19–20, which also speak of liturgical prayer, likewise include the concepts of fear, humility and reverence. Most likely all three of Benedict's little treatises are influenced by

RM 47–48. Clearly, Benedict considers liturgical activity to be extremely important. Humility could refer to the possible vanity of those who can sing or read well in public. Sobriety may show that Benedict does not countenance flashy performances in church. Reverence no doubt has to do with the fact that the whole liturgy is directed to all-holy God, before whom the only proper attitude is reverential awe. Benedict's usual word for this is *timor* (see notes 19.1,3), but he uses *tremor* in 50.3 for the same purpose. See *Index:* Fear.

by the one ordered to do so by the abbot (et cui jusserit abbas) seems repetitious and awkward in this position. Most translators tone it down to "at the order of the abbot."

XLVIII: DE OPERA MANUUM COTIDIANA

[1]Otiositas inimica est animae, et ideo certis temporibus occupari debent fratres in labore manuum, certis iterum horis in lectione divina.
[2]Ideoque hac dispositione credimus utraque tempore ordinari: [3]id est ut a Pascha usque kalendas Octobres a mane exeuntes a prima usque hora paene quarta laborent quod necessarium fuerit; [4]ab hora autem quarta usque hora qua sextam agent lectioni vacent; [5]post sextam autem surgentes a mensa pausent in lecta sua cum omni silentio, aut forte qui voluerit legere sibi sic legat ut alium non inquietet; [6]et agatur nona temperius mediante octava hora, et iterum quod faciendum est operentur usque ad vesperam. [7]Si autem necessitas loci aut paupertas exegerit ut ad fruges recolligendas per se occupentur, non contristentur, [8]quia tunc vere monachi sunt si labore manuum suarum vivunt, sicut et patres nostri et apostoli. [9]Omnia tamen mensurate fiant propter pusillanimes.
[10]A kalendas autem Octobres usque caput quadragesimae, usque in hora secunda plena lectioni vacent; [11]hora secunda agatur tertia, et usque nona omnes in opus suum laborent quod eis iniungitur; [12]facto autem primo signo nonae horae, deiungant ab opera sua singuli et sint parati dum secundum signum pulsaverit. [13]Post refectionem autem vacent lectionibus suis aut psalmis.
[14]In quadragesimae vero diebus, a mane usque tertia plena vacent lectionibus suis, et usque decima hora plena operentur quod eis iniungitur. [15]In quibus diebus quadragesimae accipiant omnes singulos codices de bibliotheca, quos per ordinem ex integro legant; [16]qui codices in caput quadragesimae dandi sunt.
[17]Ante omnia sane deputentur unus aut duo seniores qui circumeant monasterium horis quibus vacant fratres lectioni, [18]et videant ne forte

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inveniatur frater acediosus qui vacat otio aut fabulis et non est intentus lectioni, et non solum sibi inutilis est, sed etiam alios distollit: [19]hic talis si—quod absit—repertus fuerit, corripiatur semel et secundo; [20]si non emendaverit, correptioni regulari subiaceat taliter ut ceteri timeant. [21]Neque frater ad fratrem iungatur horis incompetentibus.

[22]Dominico item die lectioni vacent omnes, excepto his qui variis officiis deputati sunt.

[23]Si quis vero ita neglegens et desidiosus fuerit ut non velit aut non possit meditare aut legere, iniungatur ei opus quod faciat, ut non vacet.

[24]Fratribus infirmis aut delicatis talis opera aut ars iniungatur ut nec otiosi sint nec violentia laboris opprimantur aut effugentur. [25]Quorum imbecillitas ab abbate consideranda est.

RB 48: THE DAILY MANUAL LABOR

1. Idleness is the soul's enemy, so therefore at determined times the brothers ought to be occupied with manual labor, and again at determined hours in *lectio divina*.

2. Therefore, we think that both periods should be scheduled in the following way: 3. From Easter till the first of October, they should go out from Prime in the morning and work until almost the fourth hour at what is necessary. 4. But from the fourth hour until the time they recite Sext, they should be free for *lectio divina*. 5. After Sext, however, and they have risen from table, let them rest on their beds in total silence. If someone wishes to read, let him do so to himself in such a way as to disturb no one. 6. None should be recited early, about the middle of the eighth hour, and then they should do the necessary work until Vespers. 7. If, however, the necessities of the place or poverty demand that they themselves work at the harvest, they should not be sad. 8. For if they live by the work of their hands, then they are true monks, as were our Fathers and the apostles. 9. Yet everything should be arranged in moderation because of the faint-hearted.

10. From the first of October, however, until the beginning of Lent, they should be free for *lectio* until the end of the second hour. 11. Let Terce be said at the second hour, and then they should labor till None at the tasks assigned them. 12. When the first signal for the Hour of None has been given, they should each stop work and be ready when the second signal sounds. 13. After the meal, they are free for their readings and psalms.

14. During the days of Lent, in the morning they should be free for their readings until the end of the third hour, and they are to work until the end of the tenth hour at what has been assigned them. 15. In these

Lenten days, they should each receive a separate fascicle of the Bible, which they are to read straight through to the end. These books are to be given out at the beginning of Lent.

17. Above all, one or two seniors should surely be assigned to patrol the monastery at the times when the brothers are free for *lectio*. 18. They should be on the lookout for the bored brother who gives himself over to frivolity or gossip and is not serious about *lectio*. Not only is he useless to himself, but he leads others astray as well. 19. If such a one be found out—perish the thought!—let him be admonished once and again a second time. 20. If he does not improve, he should undergo the regular discipline in such a way that others will be afraid. 21. Nor should the brothers fraternize at improper times.

22. Just so, on Sunday all should be free for *lectio,* except for those who are assigned to various tasks.

23. But if someone is so negligent and slothful that he will not or cannot meditate or read, he should be assigned some work to keep him busy.

24. As for sick or fragile brothers, they should be assigned a work or craft so that they will be engaged but not so crushed by heavy labor that they flee. 25. The abbot must remain aware of their weakness.

RB 48 Notes

T

The title of RM 50, on which RB 48 is rather closely based, is much more elaborate: "Daily labor at various times according to the season." That title includes the discussion of the horarium, which Benedict also discusses. But in both chapters there are other matters treated as well, especially the practice of *lectio divina,* which are not mentioned in the titles. For an analysis of the structure of both chapters, see Kardong, 25.93-104.

1.

Idleness (Otiositas) is a Christian word, not found in the general Latin vocabulary. Perhaps Benedict uses it to avoid *otium,* which can also mean positive, creative leisure. But *otium* can also mean "idleness," as it does in 48.18. See Kardong, 29.176. For his part, the Master has no hesitation in using either *otium* or *otiosus,* which he does in RM 50.1-2. See Scholl, 71–92.

Idleness is the soul's enemy (Otiositas inimica est animae) is printed in Basil, *reg*. 192, and attributed to Solomon, but Gribomont, 2.106, shows that it actually comes from neither Basil nor the Bible. The idea is also found in many ancient sources, and especially Justinian, *nov.* 133.6,

which also prescribes manual labor and scriptural reading for monks. Augustine, *op. mon.* 37, also speaks of work and Scripture reading as essential to monks. See Meeuws,193–214. Although the Master does not have this aphorism, he has much more to say about idleness in RM 50.1-7, where he reveals himself as a workaholic and a person who is afraid of leisure itself. Fortunately, Benedict has backed off from the extreme measures the Master takes to fill up every second of the monk's day. See Kardong, 25.98-99. Lentini, 418, notes that this aphorism is but one of several that Benedict uses to open chapters (e.g., RB 36 and 53). The idea that work is ascetical goes back to the Book of Genesis, but it is not very attractive to the modern mentality. I do not agree with Holzherr, 238, that Benedict sees work in the same ascetical light as does the Master.

It could be argued, however, that idleness is the major theme of RB 48, since it turns up again in vv. 18 and 24, thus forming with v. 1 an inclusion (Borias, 10.251-252). In this case, however, I do not think that the contents of the chapter bear out this thesis.

lectio divina (lectio divina) is a technical term that is sometimes translated "prayerful reading," or "spiritual reading." Literally, it means "reading from God," and can be used to refer to the Bible itself. Since the Bible was the chief content of this monastic exercise, it seems misleading to translate it "spiritual reading." Too often that comes to mean devotional reading far removed from the biblical material. I leave the word untranslated as a symbol that we have yet to discover the full implications of what it meant to the ancient monks. See Wathen, 4.207-215; Kardong, 29.171-172. For additional insights on *lectio divina,* see: Casey, 3.3-25; P. Brown, 289f.; Rousse, 9.470-506; Mundò, 3.230-255; Stanley, 439–455; Vogüé, 20.11-27; ibid., 32.96-105.

occupied (occupari). Although Benedict does not put as much emphasis as the Master on keeping the monks "occupied," there is still an element of that here as is evident from the first sentence. *RB 1980* misses this with its rendition: "should have specified periods."

determined (certis). Both Lentini and Vogüé agree that the strong and not the weak sense ("certain") is meant here. In fact, Benedict is about to determine exactly when these things should be done.

manual labor (labore manuum) can refer to either light or heavy work, but it always connotes the physical. One of the distinguishing characteristics of early monasticism was its devotion to honest work as opposed to begging. Another factor to be remembered was the ancient Mediterranean prejudice against physical labor, which was considered

the province of slaves. Thus ancient monasticism cannot be seen as in any way catering to the aristocracy. See *Index:* Work.

2.

periods (tempora) refers to the time blocks set aside for work and *lectio*. Vogüé, who has the reading *tempore* (ablative) in his Latin text, understands it to mean "according to season." *RB 1980* has *tempore* in the Latin text but translates it "times for both," which does not seem to make sense.

should be scheduled (ordinari). Although the grammar does not specifically indicate necessity ("should"), one must determine this infinitive in some way. Some translators (Steidle, *RB 1980*) have "could," but that weakens the force of the sentence too much. As it is, "we think" *(credimus)* is rather gentle. Benedict uses the same unassertive language in 39.1; 40.3; 55.4.

3.

Easter (Pascha). It is characteristic of Benedict to begin a discussion of the horarium with the Easter season; he does so with the Divine Office (10.1) and the meal schedule (41.1). By contrast, the Master usually begins with winter or Lent. Is it unwarranted to conclude that Benedict, although he claims that it is always Lent for a monk (49.1), is in fact convinced that the Easter feast (and not the ascetical life) is the central core of Christian life? See *Index:* Easter.

first of October (kalendas Octobres). Schmitz has September thirteenth, but he must be thinking of the ides of October. He may also be thinking of 41.6, where the dining schedule is altered to mid-afternoon on September thirteenth. Since the weather in Italy can still be quite hot in late September, Benedict continues the summer schedule, which allows a siesta (48.5).

from Prime (prima) could also be "at the first hour," which would mean almost the same thing, since Prime was recited at about the first hour. Lentini, 421, argues cogently that the second translation would imply that all the monks "go out" of the monastery to work, which was hardly the case. Also, if *prima* means the first hour, one would think that *hora* would be placed with it and not with *quarta*.

almost the fourth hour (hora paene quarta). Unlike the Master, and most of the other monastic Rules, Benedict does not follow a rigid horarium with the Little Hours done at exactly the third, sixth and ninth hours. Rather, he adjusts the schedule ("almost") to meet the local needs. See also 48.6, where None is adjusted a bit forward. The mention of the "fourth hour" is, of course, a reference to the ancient system

of dividing the day into twelve hours relative to its length. At the equinox, the fourth hour would begin at 9 A.M., but it would be earlier in summer and later in winter.

at what is necessary (quod necessarium fuerit). This apparently banal comment in fact says a good deal about Benedict's work ethic. Rather than being seen as merely something to keep the monks occupied as it is for the Master (RM 50.1-7), here work is seen as useful activity. That still does not bring it up to the modern concept of meaningful or even absorbing engagement, but it is a significant change from the Master, and also from Cassian and the Desert Fathers. See Kardong, 25.99-101; see *Index:* Useful.

4.

the time they recite Sext (hora qua sextam agent) like "almost" in the preceding verse, is rather vague. Vogüé, 2.599, says that the Latin text itself is unsure, but that it must mean that Sext is not recited precisely at the sixth hour. Note that Terce is not mentioned at all, probably because it was recited exactly at the third hour, whether in the oratory or in the fields by those who were too far away to attend. A probable reason for the varying time for Sext is that on some days there is a midday meal, necessitating an earlier Office.

lectio divina (lectioni divina) is usually done at optimal times in Benedict's system, whereas the Master has it done whenever the monks cannot work. Yet in the summer it is simply too hot in Italy to work outdoors at midday, so there is no alternative to having *lectio* before dinner—not the best time for reading. See *Index:* Lectio Divina.

be free for (vacent). Some translators (Lentini, Schmitz, *RB 1980*) render this "devote themselves to," but that seems to miss the point. While one can admit that *lectio* demands concentration and effort, it is not just another labor, but rather something akin to contemplation. Thus it is in the class of leisure: something that has meaning but no purpose. Since *lectio divina* means praying with and in the Bible, it is utterly serious and important. Hence Benedict and the other ancient monastic legislators "freed" their monks from ordinary labor for this activity each day. Perhaps it can be understood as a daily Sabbath in which one is freed from labor to worship God, in memory of the liberation from Egyptian slavery. Moreover, *vacent* occurs no less than six times in this chapter. See Wathen, 4.211; Kardong, 29.174.

Another clue to the real nature of monastic *lectio* is found in RB 4.55-56, where one is told to "Listen gladly to holy reading." Certainly, "gladly" and "leisure" are concepts that go together, for both imply the

spontaneity of love. This is followed by the saying: "Give yourself frequently to prayer." Since this verse seems tightly bound to 4.55 (see notes on 4.55-56), it seems evident that the leisure of *lectio* must be free enough to allow and promote spontaneous outbursts of prayer. See Holzherr, 242.

5.

to himself (sibi) sounds odd to us, but is a necessary precaution for Benedict, since even when alone the ancients normally read aloud. If that were done in the dormitory, it would make it difficult for the others to sleep during the siesta time. In RM 50, *lectio divina* seems to be strictly a group activity, but Benedict considers it a private affair. Thus in 48.17-18, there is a check on whether the brothers are doing their *lectio* conscientiously, which would not be necessary if it were done in a group. The movement from public to private *lectio* is a very important step toward restoring the privacy of the individual, a thing that was very precious to the Desert Fathers, but almost totally unknown to the Master. On the other hand, the absence of private cells made real privacy difficult to come by (see RB 22 Overview). See *Index:* Lectio Divina.

in total silence (cum omni silentio). Probably there was a temptation to chat in the dormitory after the meal. Most modern Benedictine communities have a period of conversation after the main meal of the day. Although the Rule does not seem to make provision for conversation, RB 49.7 implies that it did take place. In fact, there is no way for people to get to know each other without some social interchange. See *Index:* Silence.

rest on their beds (pausent in lecta sua). The siesta is normal in hot countries because of the midday heat. But an additional factor made it almost necessary for Benedict's monks, namely, the shortness of the night rest due to the late setting of the sun in summer. See notes 8.4; 10.1.

6.

about the middle of the eighth hour (mediante octava hora) is another adjustment of the absolute schedule, as in vv. 3 and 4. This would give them a siesta of about two hours, which seems quite generous, but is not when one considers that they had only five hours of sleep at night during summer. Lentini, 423, rightly notes that Benedict is willing to tailor his horarium to human needs, rather than keep to some abstract ideology that does not take them into account.

the necessary work (quod faciendum est) is another expression of Benedict's philosophy of work as in v. 3: one does what needs doing.

The utilitarian predominates over the ascetical or aesthetical when it comes to work.

7.

they should not be sad (ne contristentur). Benedict frequently expresses concern about the morale of his community, and realizes that it is affected by the arrangement of such basic necessities as sleep and work. This concern illustrates his "turn to the subject," a trait which is almost entirely lacking in the Master. Benedict's interest in the feelings and sensibilities of the individual is a point made often by Vogüé in his great commentary on RB. See *Index:* Sadness.

necessities of the place (necessitas loci). Benedict shows his essential realism by an awareness that there is a great variety of local conditions. This trait in his Rule has made it applicable to many situations down through the ages. See Kardong, 3.49.

poverty (paupertas) is not a reference to religious dispossession but to actual material indigence. Apparently, Benedict's monks were not exactly poor, but he could envisage how that could become the case. The assumption is that they would hire outside help to take in the harvest if they could. That indicates that they were not accustomed to certain very heavy tasks. For his part, the Master forbids his monks such work, on the grounds that they will not be able to fast if they work that hard (RM 86). See *Index:* Poor.

A common problem in modern monasteries of the Western world is overwork along with affluence. In many communities, the work, whether it be educational or industrial, becomes so demanding as to sap most of the energy of the monks. It is a difficult decision to cut back on the level of material comfort of the community in order to have more time for a life of prayer and *lectio divina*. See *Index:* Work.

8.

For if they live by the work of their hands, they are true monks. (Quia tunc vere monachi sunt si laborum manuum suarum vivunt). The closest saying in the early monastic tradition is *vit. patr. Jur.* 1.2: Romanus lived by his own labor "as a true monk." There is no evidence that Benedict knew this text, which was written in Gaul shortly before his own Rule. A much better known saying was Cassian, *conf.* 24.12,2: The race of monks "lives by the work of its own hands." Perhaps we should understand this as one of Benedict's "Golden Age" arguments, in which he points to the earliest monks as paragons of all virtue (see 18.24-25: the entire Psalter in one day; 40.6: no wine at all). See Lentini, 424. There is, however, no lack of monastic texts extolling self-support

and hard work: *vit. Ant.* 25; *hist. mon.* 1; Augustine, *mor. eccl.* 1.70; *vit. patr., verb. sen.* 5.1.16; Cassian, *inst.* 2.3; 5.39.3. See *RB 1980,* 250.

Although manual labor cannot be said to be intrinsic to the monastic vocation, and soon became unknown for choir monks in early medieval Europe, the Cistercian reform recognized it as one of the components of an integral life of simplicity and contemplation. The press of ecclesial and intellectual demands will always draw monks away from physical work, but they are usually the worse off for this separation.

Regarding the apostles, the mention of whom is rather surprising, Jerome, *ep*. 125.11, basing himself on the case of Paul, claims that they all worked for their living. Augustine, *op. mon.* 23–24, however, denies it, noting that Scripture only says that Paul and Barnabas actually worked (*op. mon*. 23–24). It is probably truer to say that the Bible in general is not interested in the question and certainly doesn't make physical work a requirement for Christian life.

9.

in moderation (mensurate). The same theme of solicitude for the fragile and weak recurs in 48.24. The trick, of course, is to challenge people without crushing them, as Benedict puts it in 64.19. Perhaps he had personal experience with overwhelming work, since he also insists that those who are put in charge of a job deserve adequate help for that job (see 31.17; 35.4; 53.20). See *Index:* Measure.

faint-hearted (pusillanimes). Vogüé, 2.601, simply has *faibles* (the weak), which is a reasonable alternative. Blaise, s.v., gives this as a secondary meaning of the word, which seems to be a Christian creation since it does not appear in OLD. But the word is literally "little souled," which usually refers to a lack of courage.

Although 48.9 is not the midpoint of Benedict's horarium, it corresponds to the midpoint of RM 50, where the Master has placed the following aphorism, apparently as a key principle: "For when he is occupied in doing something he has no time to think of anything except what he is intent upon doing with his hands" (RM 50.38). Compared to that, Benedict's saying about compassion for the weak is very striking. See Kardong, 25.95-98.

10.

This marks the beginning of the second major division in Benedict's horarium, namely, wintertime. The single daily meal is now eaten in the afternoon about 2:30. The Master has the monks do three hours of *lectio* in the early morning, remarking that "it is cold and the brothers cannot do any work" (50.9). Benedict reduces this period to two hours,

probably on the grounds that three consecutive hours of *lectio* is too difficult. Nor does he remark on the unsuitability of early morning for work; perhaps he assumes that it is ideal for *lectio.*

the beginning of Lent (caput quadragesimae) is the first Sunday of Lent and not Ash Wednesday (Lentini, 425).

11.

Let Terce be said at the second hour (Hora secunda agatur tertia) is one of the many adjustments Benedict makes in the basic horarium to fit the local circumstances. The danger is that the Hours become *completely* disengaged from their proper setting. That had become the case with the Divine Office before Vatican II, when many communities prayed Matins in the evening and occasionally sang Vespers before noon. Although Sext is not mentioned in this verse, it is assumed that it was duly prayed. Benedict only mentions the changes he is making in the regular pattern.

end of the second hour (in hora secunda plena). At the winter solstice, this would be about 9 A.M. in southern Italy.

12.

first signal has been given (facto . . . primo signo). A double signal would be especially necessary when monks are working at some distance from the monastery, and the end of the work period always involves some cleaning up that takes more time. Customarily, cenobitic communities assemble in *statio* or in a lineup outside the oratory and proceed in at a second signal. The usual time between signals is five minutes. The same idea is expressed in 43.1 (see note), where the monk is urged to drop his work and rush to the Office. Here, however, it is acknowledged that there must be an interval to allow the whole group to assemble. See *Index:* Alacrity.

13.

After the meal (Post refectionem). Presumably the single daily meal occurs immediately after None. This reading period probably extended from about 3:15 to 4:00 P.M. Sunset is about 5:00 in Rome in the winter, and Vespers must be completed before that time (41.8).

their readings and psalms (lectionibus suis et psalmis). Since *lectio* is plural here, we translate it "readings" instead of leaving it in Latin. It appears that both *lectionibus* and *psalmis* refer to the contents of *lectio* and not the process. The adjective *suis* (their) indicates that the monks have each been assigned readings, no doubt in the same way as is described in 48.15. In 8.3, Benedict speaks of the memorization of

"psalms and readings," by those who have still to learn them. He is probably referring to the need for memorized materials in the Night Office, when poor lighting and shortage of books would necessitate such skills. At any rate, this is the third hour of *lectio* for the day. Perhaps the time after a big meal is not ideal for such an enterprise, but it still seems preferable to three straight hours in the morning.

14.

end of the third hour (tertia plena). About 9:45 A.M. Thus during Lent, the monks do three consecutive hours of *lectio,* a practice which is no doubt somewhat penitential for some people. *RB 1980* has omitted "end of" here, which makes it look as if the *lectio* was only two hours.

end of the tenth hour (decima hora plena). This would be about 3:30 P.M. for much of the winter. The work period of about six and a half hours during Lent was the longest in the horarium. Perhaps the fasting regime restricted Lenten work to the lighter variety. According to 41.8, the monks eat after Vespers during Lent. Compline would follow dinner and public reading. No mention is made of Sext and None, but they are taken for granted. Because of the late meal, the Lenten schedule is the simplest of all: a long period of *lectio* followed by a long period of manual labor.

15.

a fascicle of the Bible (singulos codices de bibliotheca). According to Mundò 2.65-92, *bibliotheca* here refers to the Bible and not to the library of the monastery, as it is usually understood. The Bible, of course, *is* a "library," since it is a collection of books written by different authors. Hence the term *bibliotheca* was sometimes used by early writers such as Jerome, *ep.* 6, who were looking for a variety of words to describe Sacred Scripture. The biblical culture of the early monks is well known, and especially attested to in the Pachomian writings: *lib. Hors.* 51; Pachomius, *pr.* 3; 6; 28; 36-37; 59-60.

If one prefers to read *bibliotheca* as "library," it should be remembered that at the time of Benedict, that meant at most a few hundred books in a single cabinet *(armarium)* in the sacristy of the church. The famous Benedictine libraries, such as Melk (see Glassner, 368–398) only came much later when book production had achieved a higher level of development. The world-renowned monastic scriptoria where monks and others wrote their magnificent copies of the ancient classics were not from the time of Benedict but from a later period (eleventh century).

fascicle (codex) of the Bible in this sense probably did not mean a single literary unit (e.g., Romans) but rather one of the quires into which the Bible was sewn. Since ancient manuscript Bibles were extremely

bulky, they were often sewn into nine fascicles or quires for easier cartage and usage.

they shall each receive a separate fascicle (omnes singulos codices accipiant). The term "separate" *(singulos)* is what inclines me to accept Mundò's reading. Of all the modern translations, only the latest, i.e., Salzburg, has incorporated this interpretation. Lentini, 428, however, points out that the term *singulos,* even though it agrees grammatically with the object (books), may well belong with the subject (all) in meaning. That is a Latin usage that also occurs in 35.12. Vogüé, 2.603, translates it like Lentini, as do most other commentators.

The passive connotation of the verb "receive" indicates that the abbot gave each monk the biblical "book" that he deemed best (see Lentini, 427); for his part, the monk was to read the entire book and not pick and choose favorite verses. In this way, one can transcend the subjectivism that can vitiate even the most pious devotion. Benedict is speaking here of private *lectio,* and one of the great values of public reading, whether in church or refectory, is that individuals hear books they might not have chosen for themselves. It is but another means of escaping the prison of individualism and participating in a common culture.

straight through to the end (per ordinem ex integro). A disciplined approach to reading is always preferable to a fickle flitting about from text to text, but as regards the Bible, a continuous reading has special significance. The liturgy typically uses pericopes ("cuttings") that have their purpose, but generally lack context. A continuous reading of the biblical text is faithful to the purpose for which it was written. One of the revolutionary principles of the Protestant Reformation, especially with the Swiss Calvinists, was the reading and preaching of continuous biblical texts.

16.

the beginning of Lent (caput quadragesimae). As in 48.16, this probably refers to the first Sunday of Lent. The customaries of medieval monasteries such as Farfa (2.51; PL 150.1284d-1285c) show that this was an annual ritual at which monks returned and received books. Unfortunately, they also indicate that all sorts of books of little or no spiritual value were being used for *lectio divina.* See Mundò, 2.65-92.

17.

seniors (seniores) does not refer to chronological age but rather years in the community (63.7-8). Even more, though, it describes a monk who has proven by his life that he has internalized the monastic values. See *Index:* Senior.

patrol (circumeant) indicates that the monks did *lectio* alone and in various places. There were no private cells, and the cloister was the usual place for *lectio,* but no doubt this varied greatly from place to place and from season to season. Since *lectio* is a public and communal exercise in the Rule of the Master (RM 50), there is no need for monitors—even though that Rule is extremely distrustful of human intentions. And once the private cell became normative in Benedictine monasteries, there was no more role for monitors. The verb *circumire* eventually influenced the official title of medieval officials called *circatores* who held considerable power in monasteries. See Feiss, 346–379. There is something contradictory about appointing monitors to check on a "free" activity such as *lectio divina*. Yet, the freedom is not given to simply waste time. Those who cannot do *lectio* should be provided some work (48.23).

18.

bored (acediosos) Boredom is a different problem than laziness. In fact, a monk with an abundant supply of physical energy may find *lectio* very hard because it requires repose and concentration. If *acediosus* is closely connected to the classic fault/sin of *acedia,* then it means disinterest in spiritual things. See 29.177. Cassian speaks of *acedia* and *lectio* in *inst.* 10.2.7.

gives himself over to frivolity (vacat otio). Benedict shows here that he is well aware that leisure (vacat) can be misused. As we pointed out earlier (see 48.1; *otiositas*), *otium* can be a positive concept, but in this verse it obviously is not.

useless (inutilis). The term *utilis* is fairly frequent in RB, where it usually connotes objective and public value. In this case, the reference is personal but the point is somewhat the same: by neglecting *lectio,* one is simply missing out on what the monastic life has to offer, namely, the peace and solitude where solid spiritual growth can take place. See *Index:* Useful.

leads others astray (alios distollit) presumably by engaging them in gossip. The monk who cannot spend time alone will eventually destroy the solitude of others because his restlessness needs company.

20.

others will be afraid (ut ceteri timeant). The idea of exemplary punishment is not congenial to our society, nor do monasteries normally practice it. But in the "shame and honor" society of the Mediterranean, where life is lived out in public, and personal "face" is the most important possession, one's reputation with the neighbors means everything. Indeed, 1 Timothy 5:20 teaches the very same thing as this verse, with

the very same words. In fact, the idea of honor and its loss is very apparent in the whole Bible, when one looks for it. See B. Malina and J. Neyrey, 25–66. On shame, see note 43.7. Although this use of fear seems to be unworthy of a sophisticated age like our own, in fact it is still urged as a main argument for exemplary deterrence such as capital punishment. See *Index:* Fear.

the regular discipline (correptioni regulari subjaceat). Although the Rule never says what this "regular" discipline is, in this case it is obviously public and probably verbal. *Correptio* literally means "to snatch," but in the transferred sense it means to rebuke. The term "regular" suggests a definite code of punishments, but no such system exists in the Rule (see note 3.10). See *Index:* Discipline.

improper (incompetentibus) is an unusual word, but also seen in Cassian, *inst.* 2.15 and 4.2 where it means the same thing. For Benedict, there is a time and place for everything, and conversation is definitely out of place during the time for *lectio divina*.

21.

Nor should the brothers fraternize at improper times (Neque frater ad fratrem jungatur horis incompetentibus) implies that there *were* times for personal conversation and what we today call "recreation." It is hard to see when this took place, since Benedict's horarium seems filled with other things, but it must have existed if its abuse could be prohibited. See also 49.7, where talking and jesting are curtailed during Lent. Indeed, the very idea of "brotherhood" seems to demand that the brothers know each other and communicate their hopes and fears to one another. See *Index:* Brother.

22.

various tasks (variis officiis). Although the monastery is an environment especially created to provide holy leisure and that particularly on Sunday, the Lord's Day, nevertheless, bodily life must go on. Therefore, cellarers, cooks, guest-directors and others must take care of their duties. Christianity has never guarded the Sabbath rest as jealously as Orthodox Judaism. In fact, at the time of Benedict there was probably no Church law prohibiting Sunday labor (see the next verse). Yet there should be no "office" in the monastery that regularly excuses from or precludes *lectio divina*. Monastic officials still need sufficient leisure to maintain their contemplative lives.

Curiously, the Master (RM 75) does not require Sunday *lectio divina* but allows a monk to simply rest if he wishes. He understands quite well that *lectio* is by no means easy (see next verse). Other patristic

texts recommending that Sunday be kept entirely free for *lectio* are: Jerome, *ep.* 22.35; *reg. iv patr.* 3.6-7; Caesarius, *serm.* 73.4.

23.

so negligent or slothful that he will not or cannot meditate or read (ita negligens aut desidiosus fuerit ut non velit aut non possit). Although the problem here seems to be the same as in 48.18, the vocabulary is slightly different. The sin of "sloth" is actually quite different from "acedia," the latter being strictly spiritual while the former usually involves a lack of physical energy. It is also puzzling why Benedict would accuse a person who cannot read of being "slothful," unless this implies that that person has not tried to learn how. It should be noted that the exception granted here is just for Sunday. No one is entirely exempt from *lectio* but since the whole of Sunday is to be given over to that pursuit, it could be that some are unable to manage that much holy leisure. Perhaps a more difficult issue for our own times are the highly nervous and distracted modern personalities whose attention span and powers of concentration are so atrophied by excessive stimulation that they cannot concentrate. Can someone be a monk if he or she cannot do *lectio?* See *Index:* Lectio Divina.

meditate (meditare) probably does not mean the exact same thing as our English term "meditate." In RB 8.3, the monks are to "meditate" the psalms after the Night Office, but it is quite clear that this is done in order to prepare themselves to pray the Office better. In fact, "meditation" originally meant the rumination of a biblical text, such as a psalm verse. Before one could do that, of course, it had to be memorized. Probably Benedict sees this as one of the leisure activities the monk should do on Sunday. For the ancient idea of "meditation," see Vogüé, 12.3-16. See *Index:* Meditation.

to keep him busy (ut non vacet). As in 48.1, the purpose of work here is obviously therapeutic and ascetic, rather than practical. Still, I would argue that the chapter overall is more interested in the practical value of work. Unlike the Master (RM 50), busy-work is not a big part of Benedict's program. See Kardong, 25.98-99.

24.

sick or fragile brothers (Fratribus infirmis aut delicatis). Although this discussion appears to be tacked on to the chapter and not particularly germane, in fact it does repeat a frequent theme of Benedict: namely, that people should be challenged but not crushed by their work. This same theme appeared as the central aphorism of this chapter (see note 48.9) and is stated in memorable form in RB 64.19. Thus, we have a second

inclusion, which may counterbalance the first one, that is, the repetition of the prohibition against idleness (48.1,18).

RB 48 Overview

The title of RB 48 speaks only of work, but in addition the chapter is about the daily schedule and it also says much about *lectio divina*. In this, it follows the corresponding chapter in RM 50 surprisingly closely, considering that Benedict generally ignores the Master toward the end of his Rule. In this case, however, close comparison with RM is quite enlightening. Therefore, we shall have to describe RM 50 at some length in order to see the similarities and differences.

A. RM 50: A Balanced Diptych

It does not require modern structural analysis to discover the obvious formality of RM 50 (see 25.93-98). After an introduction of seven verses that argue for the necessity of monastic work, the main body of the chapter is divided into the seasons of winter and summer. Each season has exactly thirty verses (8-38; 39-69), and these units are in turn subdivided into four regular blocks that speak of the four "watches" of the day: Prime, Terce, Sext and None. Finally, there is an epilogue of nine verses devoted to additional details of manual labor for monks.

Besides this generally regular framework, in which the winter section is almost perfectly stylized while the summer part is less regular, there are other repetitions as well. The phrase "As soon as they come out . . . " is repeated no less than eight times, which has a mesmerizing effect on the reader. But even more striking is this saying, which is repeated five times: " . . . giving thanks to the Lord in the oratory for having been entitled to spend three hours of the day occupied in spiritual labors free from sin" (50.17,23,34-35,51-52,54-55).

Far from a mere pious formula, this saying about the flight from sin is explained in 50.2-5 by the very practical necessity of keeping the monks busy lest the vacuum created by free time should allow sin to flood into their souls. And the same program is inserted at the very center of the chapter, in v. 38, which might be called the "central aphorism," a kind of rhetorical hinge upon which everything else hangs.

As is his wont, the Master includes a wealth of detail in this rather rigid and ideologically severe framework. There are charming details about such things as group *lectio* and the various particulars associated with cenobitic work in sixth-century Italy. Nevertheless, the details should not distract us from the fact that RM 50 proposes a definite philosophy of monastic work, which is built on a remarkable anthropol-

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ogy. For a detailed analysis of this anthropology, which is mostly found in RM Thp 40–42; 3.65-66; 14.82-86 and 90.51, see Vogüé, 7.136-164.

In the Master's view, the human soul is beset by constant pressure from both the flesh and the spirit, being pulled this way and that toward sin. On the one hand, the human heart continues to produce evil thoughts which must be denied expression by silence (RM 8–9). Conversely, the unoccupied soul will be invaded by evil influences, so it must be continually engaged in holy thoughts and activities. Since most monks are incapable of defending themselves against these evil forces, the Rule and the abbot must arrange every moment of their lives. This also accounts for the oppressive atmosphere and the terror of sin that pervades RM 50.

B. Benedict's Horarium

Although he has clearly used the basic outline of RM 50, Benedict makes telltale adjustments that show us plainly the difference in spirit between the two writers. Of course, part of Benedict's motivation is abridgment, and in RB 48 he reduces the Master's material by exactly three to one, which is the usual ratio. But within this program of shortening, it is fascinating to note what he emphasizes and what he drops. Without a knowledge of RM 50, we would never suspect some of the dynamics at work in this chapter.

First, Benedict has reduced the material on the horarium from sixty to fourteen verses. Nevertheless, he has not just simplified it; in fact, in one sense he has greatly complicated it by adding several slight adjustments to the schedule. Four times (see notes for 48.3,4,6,10) he moves the time for one of the Little Hours slightly forward or backward to produce a more suitable period for work or *lectio*.

This tinkering with the horarium may not appear very consequential, but it is in fact revolutionary when compared to the earlier (and later) monastic tradition (see Vogüé, 5.589f.). By and large, the ancient monastic legislators insist that the Day Hours be prayed precisely at the third, sixth and ninth hours. This is a good general principle, which was not taken seriously enough by monks over the ages, but Benedict refuses to let it dominate the life of his community. Rather, he understands that local circumstances are too varied to be that rigidly structured. Hence he creates a carefully varied and calibrated annual horarium that takes into account human needs. Although he does not say so, it seems obvious that his followers are free to readjust the program to suit their own local conditions. See Kardong, 3.47–50.

Besides shortening and adjusting the horarium of the Master, Benedict also switches it around so that summer is discussed before

winter. Unlike RM, which usually begins by discussing Lent, Benedict prefers to begin with the Easter season (see notes on 10.1 and 41.1). This can hardly be accidental, since he must have made a conscious choice to do so in these three cases, two of which depend on RM.

Moreover, it seems that in both Rules, the entire horarium is determined to a large extent by the liturgical season. This is what decides when the main meal of the day will be eaten, and that in turn determines what periods will be used for *lectio* and manual labor. The last consideration, at least for Benedict, is the time for the Little Hours, which are simply fitted into this larger framework. This may be mildly shocking to someone who thinks that everything in a Benedictine monastery revolves around the Divine Office. In fact, the whole of life is worthy of sanctification and not something to be violently stretched on an abstract framework determined by clock-hours. See Kardong, 25.103-104.

C. Benedict's Philosophy of Work

We have already noted certain attitudes of the Master that will necessarily shape his philosophy of work and make it quite different from that of Benedict. Still, these differences are not at all apparent if one is unaware of RM 50, which was the condition of all commentators before recent times. Hence their reading of RB 48 was usually quite at variance with the one that will be presented here.

The typical commentator of RB 48 has laid great stress on work as a pillar of monastic life. Thus Holzherr, 238–239, emphasizes the problem of idleness and lays stress on the repetition of the theme later on in the chapter (48.18,23). While the repetition deserves to be taken seriously, it should also be noted that Benedict has reduced the Master's exaggerated remarks about idleness (RM 50.1-7) to just one verse. True, it is the first verse, but there are other factors that prevent us from regarding the whole chapter as a commentary on that verse.

For example, Benedict does not seem to regard work as simply an antidote to idleness, which is the Master's view. This ascetical attitude toward work, which is the legacy of the Eastern anchorites, is not incompatible with the Bible. In the Genesis myth of the origins of sin, work is described as the penalty for human disobedience (Gen 3:18-19). Benedict, however, exhibits little of this point of view. To judge from his *obiter dicta*, which are sometimes more revealing than conscious theory, he sees work as primarily utilitarian. Twice (48.3,6) he tells the monks to simply work at "what needs to be done."

This apparently casual remark may be more important than it seems to be. What it suggests is a mentality that values greatly that which is

of use to the community (see notes on *utilis* in 3.3,12; 7.18 and 48.18). To work at what is truly useful is not an expression of individual ascetical endeavor, but rather one that feeds into practical charity. By doing what is needed, one responds to the needs of each member of the community, for all depend on certain tasks being accomplished.

This is not to deny that any trace of the ascetical view of work persists in Benedict's mentality. Thus, on Sunday, monks who cannot read or contemplate are to be given busywork (48.23), but this is a trifle compared to the thoroughgoing effort of the Master to interpret all work as a block to sin. Nor is it to ignore Benedict's remarks on the harvest as a sort of penance that the monks would not endure if they could afford to hire laborers (see notes 48.7-9). No doubt it is possible to conceive of a more inspiring attitude toward work than this, but it should also warn us against overemphasizing the work element in Benedict's balanced horarium.

D. Lectio Divina in RB 48

The word "balance" in the last sentence was not used lightly. In fact, the horarium of both RM and RB is carefully devised to include a certain amount of manual labor and a certain amount of *lectio divina*. Although the amounts vary from season to season, we might summarize by saying that the monks work about six hours a day and read about three hours. If we take this chapter seriously, then we are probably somewhat nonplused by the sheer amount of time devoted to *lectio divina*. What can this possibly mean?

In our own time, of course, it is a very rare monk who puts in three hours a day at *lectio*; most of them could not even if they wanted to, given the fact that they work so much. Consequently, we have to say that the original balance of Benedict has been seriously altered. Anyone who would set out to restore the primitive lifestyle of the Rule would have to grapple seriously with this problem.

Before we become overly discouraged, however, we should note that it is not exclusively a modern problem. In fact, RB 48 itself indicates that the *lectio* was not something that all monks greatly relished, nor were they all faithful to it. Twice, in 48.18 and 23, Benedict is forced to make provisions for violations of the time for *lectio.* This indicates that there simply was no "Golden Age" when all monks were eager for holy leisure and made optimum use of it.

But any return to the primitive practice of *lectio divina* assumes that we know what it meant for them and what it could mean for us today. Here again, it might be said that the traditional commentators have not been very helpful. In fact, it was probably not too long after the time

of Benedict that there was a departure from the original ideal of *lectio*. We can probably say that for Benedict, *lectio* was almost exclusively tied to the Bible itself. Although it is not possible to prove this point conclusively, the vocabulary of RB 48.15 (see note) indicates that the books given out for *lectio* were really fascicles of the Bible. When the popularity of the Bible declined in the late medieval period, *lectio divina* became something else—usually "pious reading." The modern Catholic might applaud biblical *lectio* as more in harmony with the spirit of Vatican II, but the matter is not so simple as that. The question still remains: How does one actually *do lectio divina*? To put it another way: how does one actually pray the Bible?

Though the entire subject cannot be discussed here, it seems that at least two elements of *lectio* need exploration. First, we must recognize that ancient reading was not the same as our practice. The ancients did not merely follow words on a page as we do but customarily vocalized them, even when alone. Consequently, they read more slowly and they also involved more of their faculties in the process. This in turn enabled them to memorize texts more easily than we do, and to retain those texts in their minds for meditation. For further discussion of ancient reading habits, see Leclercq, 1.13-24; Wathen, 4.207-215.

Consequently, for the early monks, *lectio divina* was not a matter of scanning book after book for pious thoughts. Rather, it was the leisurely savoring of biblical texts that were mostly committed to memory. Some of this memorization (see notes 8.3 and 48.23) was done for use in the Divine Office, but much of it was meant to equip the person for private rumination. Thus the lives of the early monks often speak of them repeating biblical verses at their work, and usually that work was simple enough so as not to demand too much concentration.

But ancient *lectio* was not mere memorization of biblical texts. Even though biblical studies were not as highly developed as they are today, it is likely that at least the better-educated monks attempted to penetrate the meaning of the sacred text. Probably they had at least a few commentaries of Church Fathers such as Jerome and Augustine to aid them in their study.

Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that even these learned commentaries bear little resemblance to what we today would call biblical studies. Mostly, they are concerned to "find Christ" in the Scripture, and since the literal meaning of at least the Jewish Bible does not speak of Christ, then other methods had to be employed to find him. That is why they usually turned to the allegorical method. For a discussion of this method, see Smalley, 1–36.

One of the great advantages of the allegorical method was its emphasis on the imagination. Clearly, the only way to "see" the Christian

mysteries in the Jewish texts so much favored for *lectio* was to do so by way of imagination. This ensured that the "meditator" would be fully engaged in the process, but it also had a serious drawback. For when there is little interest in the literal, historical meaning of the text, what control is there upon the imagination? This makes the allegorical method anathema to most modern biblical scholars. They concentrate all their efforts on careful analysis of the language and historical context, so it is not surprising that they are not happy to see this swept aside by imaginative methods, no matter how pious they might be.

The problem we face today is how to make use of modern biblical studies in our *lectio divina*. Even if critical scholarship is not interested in the spiritual implications of the biblical text, we still need to use that scholarly work for what it is worth. But we must also find a way to transcend it on the way to biblical prayer and contemplation. At this point in time, there are few written helps for those attempting to do genuine *lectio*. Stanley, 439–455, is still useful, but little has been done recently on this crucial issue.

Again, it is not easy to say precisely what *lectio divina* really is. It is a serious pursuit, or Benedict and the other legislators could not have allotted it three hours a day. And just as obviously, the early monks did not find it easy, or else it would not have been necessary to have *circatores* (see note 48.17). Anyone who has done concentrated biblical study knows that it is hard work.

But *lectio divina* is not just study, no matter how pious that study might be. It is not research for a sermon or a conference. Rather, it is strictly nonutilitarian time spent with the word of God for personal spiritual profit—for the salvation of one's soul. Benedict's use of a term like *vacare* for *lectio* (see note 48.4) is a clue that this is not just another work, but rather holy leisure, time spent only for God and with God.

The very term *lectio divina* (reading from God: see note 48.4) reminds us of the cardinal truth that the Bible is indeed divine revelation. Moreover, *lectio divina* is not just research into God's word as an object of knowledge, but rather a sustained effort to be open to what that word says to me here and now. No wonder, then, that some monks are found to be *acediosus* (see note 48.18), anxious to avoid the encounter with the living word of God.

XLIX: DE QUADRAGESIMAE OBSERVATIONE

[1]Licet omni tempore vita monachi quadragesimae debet observationem habere, [2]tamen, quia paucorum est ista virtus, ideo suademus

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istis diebus quadragesimae omni puritate vitam suam custodire omnes pariter, [3]et neglegentias aliorum temporum his diebus sanctis diluere. [4]Quod tunc digne fit si ab omnibus vitiis temperamus, orationi cum fletibus, lectioni et compunctioni cordis atque abstinentiae operam damus. [5]Ergo his diebus augeamus nobis aliquid solito pensu servitutis nostrae, orationes peculiares, ciborum et potus abstinentiam, [6]ut unusquisque super mensuram sibi indictam aliquid propria voluntate cum *gaudio Sancti Spiritus* offerat Deo, [7]id est subtrahat corpori suo de cibo, de potu, de somno, de loquacitate, de scurrilitate, et cum spiritalis desiderii gaudio sanctum Pascha exspectet.

[8]Hoc ipsud tamen quod unusquisque offerit abbati suo suggerat, et cum eius fiat oratione et voluntate, [9]quia quod sine permissione patris spiritalis fit, praesumptioni deputabitur et vanae gloriae, non mercedi. [10]Ergo cum voluntate abbatis omnia agenda sunt.

RB 49: THE OBSERVANCE OF LENT

1. At all times the lifestyle of a monk ought to have a Lenten quality. 2. However, because few have that kind of strength, we urge them to guard their lives with all purity during these Lenten days. 3. All should work together at effacing during this holy season the negligences of other times.

4. The proper way to do this is to restrain ourselves from all evil habits and to devote ourselves to tearful prayer, reading, compunction of heart and asceticism. 5. Therefore in these days, we should increase the regular measure of our service in the form of special prayers and abstinence from food and drink. 6. In that way each one, of his own free will with the joy of the Holy Spirit, can offer God something beyond what is imposed on him. 7. Let him deny his body some food, some drink, some sleep, some chatter, some joking, and let him await Holy Easter with the joy of spiritual desire.

8. Yet let each one propose to his abbot what he wishes to offer (to God) so that it is done with his blessing and approval. 9. For whatever is done without the permission of the spiritual father will be counted as presumption and vainglory, not reward. 10. Therefore everything should be done with the abbot's approval.

RB 49 Notes

T

Although there are three chapters on Lent in RM (51–53), Benedict

does not follow them to any great extent. Probably the reason is that they are too minutely detailed and casuistic. RB 49, on the other hand, is marked by a certain freedom and an emphasis on the spiritual motivations for Lenten observance.

observance (observantia) means external behavior. The chapter also discusses attitudes, but it is quite concrete in its interests. Just so, monasticism is primarily a *lifestyle* and not merely a philosophy. See *Index:* Conversatio.

1.
lifestyle (observance). A literal rendition of this sentence is rather awkward: "The life of a monk has a Lenten observance." Thus I have made "life" more concrete ("lifestyle") and converted Lent into an adjective. Some translations are more direct: "The monk ought always to maintain a Lenten observance" (Rochais), but Benedict's statement is subtler than that.

The "Golden Age" mentality (see notes 18.25 and 40.6) may lie behind these first two verses. In fact, Cassian, *conf.* 21.24, explicitly states that monks ought to do always what ordinary Christians do only during Lent (*conf.* 21.24). Further, monks should not consider one season like Lent as a special time for fasting, since the earliest Christians did not restrict their asceticism to that time (*conf.* 21.30). Benedict, however, does not follow Cassian, but quotes directly from the Lenten sermons of St. Leo I, which were addressed to the layfolk of Rome (49.1: *tract.* 39.2; 42.1-6). Is it possible that by this means he is in fact making a subtle criticism of Cassian's position? In a sense, though, he is still true to Cassian, for another one of the latter's principles is that it is crucial to set realistic ascetic standards, since the attempt to follow unrealistic ones will result in no asceticism at all (*conf.* 2.16 and 24).

Another exponent of carefully controlled and moderate asceticism during Lent is Basil, who speaks of it in *reg.* 8-9; 88-94. Unfortunately, Basil did not apply these prudent principles to himself and ruined his own health with excessive fasting. See *Index:* Ascesis.

2.
purity (puritate) has at least two possible connotations: (1) clean or not soiled; (2) focused on one thing. Although we interpreted the word in the second sense in RB 20.2,3, the first sense seems more likely here, given the verb "to guard."

3.
All . . . together (omnes pariter) is somewhat ambiguous due to its

position in the text. It is possible to take these as the last words of v. 2, as does Larmann 2.153-165, but it seems odd to have an adverb in the last position. If they are the first words of the next sentence, as Vogüé and Lentini think, there is still the question of whether *omnes* is the subject (as I have it), or whether it modifies *negligentias* (as Vogüé, Rochais, Steidle and Schmitz think). I have followed Larmann at least in promoting *omnes pariter* to an important position stressing the communal approach to Lent. If this is Benedict's intention, he is in the same tradition as RM 53, which treats Lent as a community exercise.

work together at effacing (suademus . . . pariter . . . diluere). Since these words still depend grammatically on "We urge" of the previous sentence, we have represented the hortative element with the word "work." That also lends a sense of communal effort to the sentence, which is what *pariter* seems to demand.

negligentias (negligences) is a tie-word with the chapters that precede this one, appearing in 36.6,10; 43.5,14; 45.2; 48.23 as well as 50.4. In this way, the chapter on Lent (49) also becomes a kind of coda to the penal material (43–46).

4.

More Leonine allusions are listed in *RB 1980,* 252: 49.2: *tract. (de quadr*.) 5.2; 49.3: *tract.* 89.2; *tract.* 2.2.3; 49.5: *tract.* 40.1. In addition, Lentini cites *tract.* 4.6 for this verse. RM 51–52 speak of the prayer and abstinence, while RM 53 mentions continence. Reading, prayer and tears appear as tools of good works in RB 4.55-57 (see notes). Prayer and tears are conjoined in 20.3-4 and in 52.4 (see notes). Reading, of course, was assigned at the beginning of Lent in 48.15-16. Except for reading, these are the classical penitential practices of the whole Church during Lent.

asceticism (abstinentia) has to do with corporal self-denial, whereas the more fundamental restraint from vice is expressed earlier in the verse *(ab omniis vitiis temperamus).* Manning, 130, notes that *tempero* here does not mean "moderate" but "completely check," the only proper approach to vice. See *Index:* Ascesis.

5.

measure of our service (pensu servitutis). *Pensum* is the participle of *pendere,* to weigh. Slaves were given a certain measure of wool to spin in a given number of days (Blaise, s.v. *pensum*). Benedict uses the same phrase to speak of the monastic life in 50.4. The unusual form *pensu* appears to be an ablative, perhaps of comparison with *ab* and dependent on "increase." But it could also be a dative. The idea is clear enough:

the monk has a regular observance demanded by his vows, but during Lent he should voluntarily increase it.

drink (potus). For Mediterranean people this would naturally suggest less wine-drinking, but it could also refer to water in warm climates. Modern hygiene indicates that abstinence from liquids can bring all sorts of harmful consequences.

6.

each one of his own free will (unusquisque . . . propria voluntate) emphasizes the free initiative of the individual in regard to Lenten penance. Although the chapter also maintains the communal (*pariter:* v. 2) and the abbatial elements (v. 8), it makes plain that the real heart of this spiritual season is the voluntary and loving choice of each person. Although the Master puts much less confidence in the individual than Benedict, at least in regard to Lent he too respects individual freedom and choice (RM 53.12).

beyond what is imposed on him (super mensuram sibi indictam) is somewhat vague, but it must refer to the ordinary ascesis required of each member during Lent. One clear example of that would be the single meal at sundown (41.7). Schmitz, 115, has the elegant: "something supererogatory."

in the joy of the Holy Spirit (cum gaudio Sancti Spiritus) is a particularly appropriate and richly significant remark. Although the natural tendency is to associate penance with sorrow, Benedict joins with Matthew 6:16 in separating them. The next verse will explain why. As Benedict states in 5.16, all of monastic life depends on a willing and spontaneous spirit of joyful love. The Holy Spirit does not appear often in the Rule (see note 7.70), but her appearance in this verse is theologically significant. By this means, Benedict makes sure that the personal initiative of the monk for Lenten penance does not stem from willfulness or self-delusion. What is necessary is to purify one's motives so that the Spirit can work freely in one's heart.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 is a fitting quote for this chapter, for Paul commends the Thessalonians for their joy in the Spirit despite the sufferings they have endured for the sake of the gospel.

7.

Just as vv. 4-5 concretize v. 3, so v. 7 renders the abstract v. 6 more explicit. Yet the spirit of the verse is remarkably generous and open-minded. Perhaps because he is speaking about voluntary penance, Benedict merely recommends that "some" food, drink and sleep be

forgone. Nor does he even demand that *all* chatter and joking be put aside, even though RB 6 would make one think that such things were never permitted in the monastery. In fact, some commentators like Lentini, 441, think they were not. For his part, Benedict may be chary of imposing a grim atmosphere on the community, a thing that the Church at large has not always avoided during Lent.

Holy Easter (sanctum Pascha) is a crucial topic in a chapter on Lent, which is after all simply a preparation for the great Christian feast. Because of the nature of human psychology, it is all too easy to become involved in Lent for its own sake, forgetting that it is strictly subordinate to Holy Easter. On the centrality of Easter for Benedict, see Rosenthal, 45–52.

the joy of spiritual desire (cum spiritalis desiderii gaudio) is a highly charged expression that also has considerable spiritual depth. The remarkable thing about the phrase is its insistence on joy during Lent. In contrast with the Master, who calls for joy only after Easter (RM 53.20), Benedict thinks that it should also permeate the penitential season that leads up to Easter. This is the equivalent of saying that for Christians there is no time of sadness. How can we be sad when we know that Christ has conquered sin and death? See *Index:* Desire, Joy.

"Spiritual desire" is a concept that also occurs in 4.46 (see note), where it is referred to eternal life. Probably "spiritual" has overtones of the Holy Spirit, who was mentioned in the previous verse. "Spiritual" is also in obvious contrast with "body" in the first part of the verse. While it might be said that the ascetic practices of the monk are calculated to decrease bodily craving, they are not meant to eradicate desire as such after the manner of the Buddhists. In fact, the logic of 49.7 seems to be that the removal of some bodily satisfactions can sharpen spiritual longing. In our time when addictions of various kinds seem to be endemic, it is well that we understand the role of genuine longing in the spiritual life. See Casey, 2, and May, passim.

8.

In these last three verses, Benedict follows the Master (53.1-15) more closely than he has done so far in this chapter, marked as it is by the thought and diction of Pope Leo (see note 1).

propose (suggerat). One merely "suggests" to the abbot what one wishes to offer. The same idea is found in 68.2, where it applies to a conversation about a task the monk has found nearly overwhelming.

blessing (oratione), literally, "prayer," is seen as the intercession of the superior with God for the success of the proposed work of the dis-

ciple (Vogüé, 2.607). According to Hausherr, 1.232 and 247, this was the regular procedure of the Eastern monks (cited by Vogüé, 6.1225).

9.

spiritual father (patris spiritalis) is not Benedict's usual way of describing the abbot, although it does jibe with two usages of this term for the abbot in the chapter on that subject (2.3,2). The term is applied to Abbot/Bishop Fulgentius of Ruspe by Ferrandus, *vit. Fulg*. 35 and 55. Gregory the Great uses it to describe an abbot in *hom. ev*. 39.10. In the context of pastoral discernment, this title for the abbot is perfectly appropriate, although it has its drawbacks in other regards (see note 2.3). The term "spiritual" for the abbot is in continuity with vv. 6 and 7, and by no means a mere convention: to be helpful to the monk, the abbot must be personally in touch with the divine Spirit. The role of guiding individuals in their spiritual growth is perhaps the most important one the abbot must exercise. See *Index:* Father.

presumption (praesumptioni) is often associated with a lust for political power in RB, but here it seems to be a mostly spiritual problem. While Benedict wants to ground Lenten penance in personal initiative, he knows that the possibilities for self-delusion in this regard are considerable. The way out of that trap is simply disclosure and obedience, seen here as the means to liberation and not as institutional control. See *Index:* Presumption.

merit (mercedi) is a fairly frequent idea in RB, though the term is often *meritum* (2.22; 7.21; 21.4; 62.6; 63.1; 64.2). Nevertheless, *merces* is also used a number of times: 4.76; 35.2; 36.5; 40.4; 49.9; 59.4 and 64.6. Although "merit theology" is out of favor in our day, Benedict saw nothing unworthy about it. To completely discount it is to disregard human psychology, which usually has unfortunate consequences. Besides, in this verse at least, the "reward" is surely spiritual and not material. See *Index:* Merit.

vainglory (vanae gloriae) is the special object of a whole *Institute* by Cassian (see esp. *inst.* 11.4). Holzherr, 249, summarizes that treatise as follows: "Vainglory is a special danger, for it seizes the spiritual part of the person, takes many forms and can spread like a fungus: gloating over one's virtues and other self-delusions; wishful thinking with compensatory mechanisms stemming from inferiority feelings; careerism and clerical pretensions. In place of this, one should take the 'royal road' down the middle, under the leading of the Spirit of the Lord, without going off the right extreme of arrogance or conscious striving for 'records,' or to the left extreme of vices."

RB 49 Overview

Benedict's chapter on Lent is one of his most successful efforts and also quite surprising in its tone. In a monastic Rule that often has to emphasize asceticism, one might expect that if there is to be a discussion of Lent, it will be super-ascetical or even grim. That is far from the case with RB 49; there is hardly a chapter in the Rule that can match its gentle and serene approach to monastic life.

Actually, the chapter begins on a rather harsh note, claiming that the very idea of a special penitential season is anomalous for monks, who ought to be perpetually ascetic. But Benedict does not linger on this "Golden Age" theme, which he also invokes elsewhere in his Rule (see 37.1 and 42.1). He immediately moves into a warm and uplifting exhortation to the community to try especially hard during this season to improve the quality of its spiritual life.

Adalbert de Vogüé, 6.1232, has remarked that the very idea of Lent as a time for moral and spiritual conversion is almost unthinkable for the Rule of the Master, which expects constant perfection. That may explain why Benedict has not modeled his chapter very closely on that document, which treats of Lent (RM 51–53) in a very dry and legalistic fashion. In place of the Master, Benedict has turned to the Lenten homilies of Pope Leo I, from whom he has borrowed many of his ideas (e.g., purity, joy, spiritual desire, service of the Lord) and even his language (see Vogüé, 2.605-606, notes).

The very idea of a monastic legislator drawing on Lenten instructions for the laity is worth thinking about. This is not, of course, the first time that kind of material has made its way into the Rule, for the Prologue is most likely based on a baptismal homily. Perhaps because Benedict feels a need for a pastoral approach instead of the casuistic one as is found in RM 51–53, he does not hesitate to join with the Great Church on this question. There are, of course, some specifically monastic touches that Benedict has drawn from the Master. Thus instead of Leo's typical Jewish-Christian combination of fasting and alms, Benedict prefers the more monastic fasting and prayer. And in his remark about transcending "the assigned measure" (49.6), Benedict is probably quoting RM 53.13 to the effect that the ordinary monastic life is not sufficient for Lent (Vogüé, 6.1221).

Traditional commentators have highlighted the emphasis of RB 49 on the individual, and that impression only increases when one compares this chapter with RM 51–53, which approach Lent in a very communal fashion. Still, it is probably not correct to downplay the communitarian aspects of Benedict's chapter. Larmann, 2.153-165, has pointed out that Pope Leo stresses the need for a group approach to

Lent (*serm.* 87.2.3; 89.2), and that Benedict has picked up on this in the first four verses of his chapter (see esp. notes 49.2-3). So, on the basis of this chapter it is good for a Benedictine community to plan its Lenten observance together and make sure that it issues in love and practical charity.

But it is also true that RB 49 does lay considerable stress on Lent as a time for the individual monk to go beyond the common observance in a personal and spontaneous way. Verses 5-7 seem to be a block of material devoted to that theme, and they are characterized by personalized language such as *nobis* (v. 5) and *unusquisque* (v. 6). In fact, the language of this entire chapter has been called sonorous, and a moving exhortation calculated to elicit full human response from each person (see Wathen, 9.82).

One of the features of RB 49 that makes it rhetorically effective is its tendency to repeat certain phrases and patterns. For example, "these days" (vv. 2, 5) and the lists of vv. 4,5 and 7, which are a triple repetition of Lenten observances. In addition to this, the language of RB 49 has many overtones in other parts of the Rule: RB 49.1 = 37.1; 42.1; RB 49.4 = 16.2; RB 49.5-7 = 16.5; RB 49.7 = 4.46; 49.8 = 5.14; 49.8-10 = 67.6-7 (Vogüé, 6.1226-1232). Since many of these passages are also based on St. Leo's sermons, it becomes apparent that that early Church Father has had a good deal of influence on the Rule of Benedict. Another set of connections exists between RB 20,49 and 52. Wathen, 9.71-78, has noticed that all three of these chapters have similar commentary on intense prayer. Even more significant, they all are concerned to properly situate private devotion within the communal context.

Perhaps the most evocative and personal feature of RB 49 is its appeal to the inmost heart of the individual for the motivation for Lenten penance. Unlike the stiff and formalistic chapters on Lent in RM, Benedict's little exhortation, which is read aloud at the beginning of Lent in most Benedictine monasteries, touches the deepest currents of personal spirituality. The key sentence in this regard is 49.7: "Look forward to holy Easter with joy of spiritual desire."

The most remarkable element in this verse is its call for joy during the Lenten season. Böckmann, 2.14-18, has noted that *gaudium* only appears in RB twice, and that is in 49.6-7, where one is surprised to find it. Traditional Catholic piety has reserved joy for the Easter season, while Lent is supposedly a time for sorrow.

Benedict, however, refuses to accept that perspective, and he does so for theological, not psychological, reasons. For the joy that he calls for during Lent does not depend on our moods, but upon a much more solid foundation, namely, the Holy Spirit (49.6). From the standpoint of Christian doctrine, Lent is in no way inferior to Easter, for although

we are waiting for the resurrection that causes the outpouring of the Spirit, we already possess the Spirit by baptism. Our waiting is joyful and hopeful, for we already experience what we await (*expectet:* 49.7).

After this positive and uplifting view of Christian Lent, it must be admitted that RB 49 ends on a less enthusiastic tone. It is typical of Benedict to close his chapters with admonitions and warnings; in this case, he tells us to make sure to clear all Lenten practices with the abbot. In one sense, such an addendum is not unexpected, since RB 49.5-7 seems to give the individual more room for personal initiative than is usual in the Rule. On the other hand, such an admonition is obviously not something Benedict has taken from the sermons of Pope Leo, since his audience was not monastic and needed no abbatial approval for their works of supererogation.

As a matter of fact, RB 49.8-10 do not come from Leo at all, but from RM 53.11-15, which demands abbatial approval for special Lenten endeavors. It is interesting to note that all Lenten resolutions in the RM are a matter of public knowledge; what is more, the whole community prays for those who have undertaken special fasts. We have seen that Benedict's chapter may be more communal than has usually been thought, but it does not have the very public aspect that we see in RM 53. Probably Benedict's treatise is more attractive to the modern sensibility that appreciates the appeal for group struggle while preserving a certain privacy for the individual.

L: DE FRATRIBUS QUI LONGE AB ORATORIO LABORANT AUT IN VIA SUNT

[1]Fratres qui omnino longe sunt in labore et non possunt occurrere hora competenti ad oratorium—[2]et abbas hoc perpendet, quia ita est—[3]agant ibidem opus Dei, ubi operantur, cum tremore divino flectentes genua.

[4]Similiter, qui in itinere directi sunt, non eos praetereant horae constitutae, sed ut possunt agant sibi et servitutis pensum non neglegant reddere.

RB 50: THE BROTHERS WHO ARE AT WORK FAR FROM THE ORATORY OR ARE ON A JOURNEY

1. Brothers who are at work very far from the oratory and who cannot arrive at the oratory in time 2.—the abbot judges whether that is

we are waiting for the resurrection that causes the outpouring of the Spirit, we already possess the Spirit by baptism. Our waiting is joyful and hopeful, for we already experience what we await (*expectet:* 49.7).

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RB 50: THE BROTHERS WHO ARE AT WORK FAR FROM THE ORATORY OR ARE ON A JOURNEY

1. Brothers who are at work very far from the oratory and who cannot arrive at the oratory in time 2.—the abbot judges whether that is

really the case—3. should pray the Office where they are working. They must kneel out of fear of the Lord.

4. Similarly, when they are sent on a journey, they should not miss praying at the proper hours. They should do so privately as they are able and not neglect to satisfy their measure of service.

RB 50 Notes

T

far (longe). In RM 55, the title asks precisely how far from the oratory a monk must be working before he is excused from attending the Divine Office. Benedict will not get involved in the matter of feet and inches; he simply leaves it as "far."

on a journey (in via), literally, "on the road." In the first verse, Benedict will use the more conventional term *itinere*.

RB 50–51 form a little pair of chapters devoted to the question of legitimate absences from Office (50) and table (51). Although chapters 50–51 are not tightly connected to what precedes, certainly RB 48–49 deal with the horarium and RB 43–46 are concerned with tardiness and unexcused absence. See Lentini, 446.

1.

very far (omnino longe) seems to respond to the Master's criterion of fifty paces, which Benedict thinks is not a legitimate distance to miss the choral recitation. Perhaps the Master judged the matter by the distance that a signal would carry (Manning, 132), whereas Benedict used the distance one could walk in, say, five minutes, that is, at least one hundred paces. It should also be admitted that some work cannot be interrupted at just any time, although Benedict seems to assume that the hours will be prayed at the right time *(hora competenti)*.

There are other basic principles at stake here as well. For example, Benedict does not subordinate everything else to the Divine Office, as was done at Cluny. Nor does he absolutely prohibit field work as the Master does in RM 86, even though it will probably be the major cause for missing Office. It seems that one must find a balance between the Scylla of a rigidity of liturgical scheduling that prevents any serious work from being done, and the Charybdis of condoning just any reason for missing the choral Office.

2.

whether that is really the case (quia ita est). In these matters we are subject to a certain danger of self-deception, especially over a long period

of time and in gradual degrees. It is the abbot's role to return us to reality.

3.

The important point is made here that the Divine Office is an obligation that attaches to the individual person and not just the community. Because only the Little Hours would be said during the workday, the brothers need no books since they know these psalms by heart (see Manning, 133).

The prescription that the Office be said *in situ* by monks who cannot attend the choral recitation is a very ancient one, going back to the origins of organized cenobitism. Thus Pachomius, *pr.* 142: " . . . on the boat, in the monastery, in the fields, on a journey, in whatever service, the various times for psalmody should not pass by unobserved." Another early witness is Basil, *reg.* 107: "If one cannot be present in person in the oratory, the duty of devotion should be carried out in whatever place one finds oneself."

kneel (flectentes genua). Since there is no mention of kneeling or genuflection in the chapters on the Divine Office (RB 8–18), this is probably to be taken in a general sense. Kneeling is an extraordinary posture, usually signifying submission. Done in a neutral, open place such as a field, it is no doubt a symbolic means of reminding oneself that God is present. It is a physical way of enhancing the atmosphere of spiritual concentration.

fear of the Lord (cum tremore divino). Benedict's usual word for awe and wonder before God is *timor,* but he uses *tremor* as well. Twice the term is used of the Last Judgment (2.6; 7.64) and once with *gravitas,* so it is clearly a weighty word. See Kardong, 8.37-44; see *Index:* Fear.

4.

they should not miss praying at the proper hours (non eos praetereant horae constitutae), literally, "the decided-upon hours should not pass them by." In order to make the sentence readily intelligible, I have added the word "praying."

They should do so privately as they are able (sed ut possunt agant sibi). This verse seems to refer to travel in a boat or a conveyance where all one can do is to silently pray the psalms. Benedict does not require a public show of devotion such as one sees with Muslims who spread their prayer rugs in a jumbo jet and pray toward the east. It should also be remembered that the traveling monk of the sixth century would hardly have a breviary in which to read the Divine Office. Such conveniences were only invented by the itinerant friars in the Middle

Ages (Lentini, 447). Practically speaking, Benedict's monks would have to recite what they knew by heart—which was probably a considerable amount.

measure of their service (servitutis pensum) is also mentioned in RB 49.5 (see note). There, however, it is contrasted with private devotion. Here it is a matter of doing one's duty no matter what circumstances. Traditionally, the Church has held clerics to the Divine Office under pain of sin. Whether Benedict would go that far is not clear, but it is plain that his thinking is not purely social. Even alone, the monk is bound to live as a monk in so far as that is possible. See *Index:* Service.

the proper hours (horae constitutae). According to Manning, 132, the obligation was to pray at the same time as the community. The notion of fulfilling the obligation later in the day only came in with the seventh–eighth centuries.

LI: DE FRATRIBUS QUI NON LONGE SATIS PROFICISCUNTUR

[1]Frater qui pro quovis responso dirigitur et ea die speratur reverti ad monasterium, non praesumat foris manducare, etiam si omnino rogetur a quovis, [2]nisi forte ei ab abbate suo praecipiatur. [3]Quod si aliter fecerit, excommunicetur.

RB 51: BROTHERS ON A SHORT JOURNEY

1. If a brother is sent out on some errand and is expected to return to the monastery the same day, he should not presume to eat outside, even if he is begged to do so by someone, 2. unless perhaps he has been told to do so by his abbot. 3. If he does otherwise, he is to be excommunicated.

RB 51 Notes

T

Brothers on a short journey (De fratribus qui non longe satis proficiscuntur), literally, "Brothers who do not go far enough (that is, to eat outside of the monastery)." It is also possible that *satis* could mean "very" in Late Latin, as Lentini, Vogüé and others have it.

Compared to RM 55–61, which is a vast and interesting mass of casuistry, RB 51 is extremely laconic. To judge from the title of RM 61, one

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of the Master's reasons for prohibiting eating outside the monastery was the need to fast before the Holy Communion that took place just before dinner.

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In *ordo mon.* 8, there is a similar prohibition: "No one may eat or drink outside the monastery without permission, for this is not in line with monastic discipline." Benedict does not give reasons for his prohibition in this chapter, but in RB 67 he makes it clear that contact with people outside the monastery is potentially harmful to the monk.

Although the notion of contamination by seculars strikes us today as paranoid and mean-spirited, it must be remembered that taking a meal with another was a much more meaningful act for the ancients than it is for us. By doing so, one acknowledged a definite bond.

is expected (speratur) probably means that the errand is not very extensive and should not take all day to complete. Manning, 134, notes that since the monks normally fasted till mid-afternoon, it should not have been very hard to observe this precept.

begged to do so (omnino rogetur). It could be that this is an oblique reference to contact with family, for who else would beg so insistently? Unquestionably, family ties were much more powerful in those times and only broken with great difficulty. Hence they were not to be casually reestablished. See Borias, 13.214. Gregory the Great, *dial.* 2.12, relates an episode related to this rule, and he also uses the term *responsum* to mean "errand," which is a Late Latin usage. But it is also true that in *dial.* 2.33-34, the famous story of Benedict and Scholastica, Gregory criticizes the absolute use of the principle of the "rule of no outside eating": the one thing that overrides such rules is the supreme Christian principle, namely, love. See *Index:* Family.

3.
But if he does otherwise (quod si aliter fecerit). Schmitz, 117, seems to refer this to the abbot's command, but that is not the obvious sense.

he is to be excommunicated (excommunicetur). This is one of many instances where Benedict ends a chapter with threats of punishment if the prescriptions of the text are not carried out, e.g., RB 54,55,62.

LII: DE ORATORIO MONASTERII

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habeatur reverentia Deo, [3]ut frater qui forte sibi peculiariter vult orare non impediatur alterius improbitate. [4]Sed et si aliter vult sibi forte secretius orare, simpliciter intret et oret, non in clamosa voce, sed in lacrimis et intentione cordis. [5]Ergo qui simile opus non facit, non permittatur explicito opere Dei remorari in oratorio, sicut dictum est, ne alius impedimentum patiatur.

RB 52: THE ORATORY OF THE MONASTERY

1. The oratory should be in fact what it is called, and nothing else should be done or stored there. 2. When the Work of God is finished, they should all leave in deepest silence and show reverence for God. 3. Thus will the brother who may wish to pray by himself not be hindered by the thoughtlessness of another. 4. But if someone perhaps wishes to pray privately at some other time, let him simply go in and pray, not in a loud voice but with tears and full attention of heart. 5. Therefore, whoever is not busy with this kind of work is not permitted to remain in the oratory, as the place is called. For the prayer of another should not be disturbed.

RB 52 Notes

Despite the apparently disparate character of these short chapters, in fact RB 52 serves as a kind of culmination for the section 43–52. The discussion of prayer runs through this whole section (see Lentini, 452).

We quote here the insightful remarks of E. Manning, 135, on this chapter (my translation): "Benedict shows that he distinguishes between what we call private and choral prayer. The latter activity *(opus)* was more 'static,' a prescription of rights, a duty *(pensum)* and less the prayer of the community than cult rendered to God. The accent is placed elsewhere (the obligation to render God his rights) and the passivity of the monks during the liturgy was doubtless greater than it is during our time. RB 52 puts some emphasis on the spontaneity in the prayer called private, but not without reservation: Benedict knows the illusions that can lead the monk to think it important to make his prayer loud enough to draw the attention and admiration of his brothers. Further, Benedict did not have to explain his thoughts about prayer, since a Rule does not undertake the task of speaking of the life of prayer. For that he turns to the spiritual writers (RB 73). Thus it would be dangerous to speak of 'prayer according to St. Benedict' on the basis of some texts that are found in RB."

1.

what it is called (quod dicitur) that is, *oratorium,* the place of prayer. Curiously, the term is used rather little in the liturgical section (RB 8–18): *orare* (never); *oratorium* (once: 11.13, but 21 times in other chapters); *oratio* (5 times in the liturgical section, 16 times elsewhere). See Manning, 134. Perhaps this indicates that for Benedict, *orare* primarily indicates private prayer, which is the thesis of Vogüé, 24.113-139 and 26.274-292. The theme of a thing actually being what it is called is also found in RB 2.2, on the term *abbas*. See *Index:* Prayer.

RB 52.4 is a direct quote of St. Augustine, *ep.* 211.7, his Rule for a monastery of nuns (*RB 1980,* 254). It is also closely modeled on *reg. serv.* II.2, Augustine's Rule for male monks.

done (geratur). Perhaps this is meant as a polemic against conditions in some Western monasteries, or even against the whole Eastern tradition. For the latter, it was customary in the Night Office to bring handwork such as plaiting; thus choral prayer could be primarily listening to a soloist. Benedict seems to want to break out of that mold. See Dyer, 41–74; Meeuws, 193–214. Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 10, prohibits handwork during the Office, but permits it during the Night Office as a means of keeping awake.

stored (condatur) is a surprising addition to Augustine's prohibition. Benedict may want to prevent the oratory from becoming a cluttered lumber-room symbolizing a verbose, "impure" prayer life. Likewise, wordy prayer is outlawed in RB 20.3 and general noise is prohibited in 52.4. See Casey, 4.103-120. One is also reminded that certain architectural periods, such as the Baroque, are tremendously cluttered, while the modern tendency is to present a clean, open prayer space. The Cistercian reform in its beginnings required simple churches, and these wonderful buildings remain among the most prayerful places in Europe. Since the relics of the martyrs are "stored" in oratories, nothing else should compete with them (Lentini, 453). See *Index:* Purity of Heart.

2.

leave in the deepest silence and show reverence for God (cum summo silentio exeant et habeatur reverentia Deo). The second part of this sentence may be explained by RM 68.1-2, which prohibits the monks from "meditating" psalms as they leave the choir Office. The Master is worried that in this way the psalms will be trivialized. Benedict, however, seems to change the meaning in a social direction: do not disturb the neighbor. This is also an interesting example of how ancient meditation was a virtually audible exercise, rather far removed from our purely mental practice. See notes 8.3 and 48.23. See *Index:* Meditation.

Some commentators have understood *reverentia* as a physical gesture of adoration toward the cross or tabernacle, but Lentini, 453, says it is a general attitude toward the holiness of the place where the praises of God are sung. See Kardong, 23.200-201; see *Index:* Reverence.

Work of God (opere Dei) may be a sly reference to the previous verse, which prohibits "work" in the oratory. Thus the right kind of "work" is perfectly in place in this prayer room. See *Index:* Work of God.

3.

thoughtlessness (improbitate). *RB 1980,* 177, notes that *improbus* has a wide range of possible meanings, ranging from downright evil to something much less serious. In this case, the problem is not malice but lack of sensitivity.

wish to pray by himself (sibi peculiariter vult orare). It is expected that choral prayer will lead some of the participants to a continued private colloquy with the Lord. The danger is, though, that the choral prayer be considered *merely* preparatory to individual contemplative prayer, or worse, that it be rushed in order to hasten the time for private prayer. Instead, we need to make the choral prayer as contemplative as possible by means of slow pacing and generous amounts of silence.

Benedict may also be thinking of Cassian's remarks in *inst.* 2.10 concerning monks who pray so clamorously that others in the vicinity cannot concentrate on their own devotion. In an age where "meditation" was oral, and private reading likewise, it was probably not unusual for someone to pray aloud even in "private" prayer. See *Index:* Prayer.

Borias, 2.25-38, shows that the end of v. 3 is the "central aphorism" of this chapter: *non impediatur alterius improbitate*. The same principle will be repeated at the end of the chapter (52.5) for emphasis.

4.

at some other time (aliter) that is, apart from the Divine Office. Here we get a rare glimpse into the private life of the ancient monks in RB, who apparently had some free time to do as they pleased. Of course, *lectio divina* was supposed to lead to intense private prayer, which would naturally take place during the ample time set aside for that exercise.

simply (simpliciter) is less simple than it looks. It could mean "just," "without further ado" or "without complication." To judge from the rest of the chapter, where Benedict is anxious to eliminate all ostentation and commotion from private prayer, the word here seems to mean that there need be no elaborate apparatus accompanying prayer. It should be something we do often and without any hesitation. Moreover, Benedict's

ingenuous remark seems to put him in the school of those who believe that it is more important to pray than to theorize about praying. The biblical foundation for this verse, and for RB 52 in general, is Matthew 6:5-8: simple prayer in one's hidden chamber (Holzherr, 254). A classic statement on simple, heartfelt prayer, which is compared to a fiery dart, is found in Cassian, *conf.* 9.15. See *Index:* Prayer.

full attention of heart (intentione cordis). If it is remembered that for the ancients the heart was not so much the seat of emotion as the seat of decision, then this phrase is easier to understand. The image is one of aiming, and the idea is full concentration of the will on the object, namely, God. This is virtually a synonym with *puritas cordis* (20.3) and probably reflects a Cassianic background. See *Index:* Heart. For an in-depth study of this phrase, see Casey, 4.103-120. The expression *intentio cordis* is a favorite one for Cassian, who uses it in *conf.* 1.7; 4.4; 9.6,7,12; 10.8; 23.11 (Lentini, 455).

with tears (cum lacrimis). Since Benedict has ruled out all loud displays of emotion *(clamosa voce),* it may seem strange that he still calls for tears. For the ancients, however, tears were not an exotic form of emotionalism but rather a prized experience that confirmed the working of the Spirit in one's heart—especially the Spirit of true compunction. See *Index:* Tears.

not in a loud voice (non in clamosa voce). The individual who prays has not only got the right to do so undisturbed, but also the duty not to disturb others.

5.

this kind of work (simile opus) could be a subtle jibe at those who do other kinds of work in the oratory (see note 52.1) or it could refer to silent as opposed to noisy prayer (Lentini, *RB 1980*). See *Index:* Work.

the prayer of another is not to be disturbed (ne alius impedimentum patiatur). The word "prayer" is supplied here as an obvious addition. This is a repetition of the "central aphorism" of v. 3 (see note), which Benedict would not have repeated unless it were very important for him. Borias, 2.34, notes that this theme is completely absent from RM 68.

as the place is called (sicut dictum est). If this chapter is read as a chiasm (see note 3), this phrase matches *quod dicitur* of v. 1. Admittedly this is not the most obvious sense, and no commentator except Borias has read it that way, but I believe he has got it right.

LIII: DE HOSPITIBUS SUSCIPIENDIS

[1]Omnes supervenientes hospites tamquam Christus suscipiantur, quia ipse dicturus est: *Hospes fui et suscepistis me;* [2]et *omnibus* congruus honor exhibeatur, *maxime domesticis fidei* et peregrinis.

[3]Ut ergo nuntiatus fuerit hospes, occurratur ei a priore vel a fratribus cum omni officio caritatis, [4]et primitus orent pariter, et sic sibi socientur in pace. [5]Quod pacis osculum non prius offeratur nisi oratione praemissa, propter illusiones diabolicas.

[6]In ipsa autem salutatione omnis exhibeatur humilitas omnibus venientibus sive discedentibus hospitibus: [7]inclinato capite vel prostrato omni corpore in terra, Christus in eis adoretur qui et suscipitur. [8]Suscepti autem hospites ducantur ad orationem et postea sedeat cum eis prior aut cui iusserit ipse. [9]Legatur coram hospite lex divina ut aedificetur, et post haec omnis ei exhibeatur humanitas. [10]Ieiunium a priore frangatur propter hospitem, nisi forte praecipuus sit dies ieiunii qui non possit violari; [11]fratres autem consuetudines ieiuniorum prosequantur. [12]Aquam in manibus abbas hospitibus det; [13]pedes hospitibus omnibus tam abbas quam cuncta congregatio lavet; [14]quibus lotis, hunc versum dicant: *Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio templi tui.*

[15]Pauperum et peregrinorum maxime susceptioni cura sollicite exhibeatur, quia in ipsis magis Christus suscipitur; nam divitum terror ipse sibi exigit honorem.

[16]Coquina abbatis et hospitum super se sit, ut, incertis horis supervenientes hospites, qui numquam desunt monasterio, non inquietentur fratres. [17]In qua coquina ad annum ingrediantur duo fratres qui ipsud officium bene impleant. [18]Quibus, ut indigent, solacia administrentur, ut absque murmuratione serviant, et iterum, quando occupationem minorem habent, exeant ubi eis imperatur in opera. [19]Et non solum ipsis, sed et in omnibus officiis monasterii ista sit consideratio, [20]ut quando indigent solacia accommodentur eis, et iterum quando vacant oboediant imperatis.

[21]Item et cellam hospitum habeat assignatam frater cuius animam timor Dei possidet; [22]ubi sint lecti strati sufficienter. Et domus Dei a sapientibus et sapienter administretur.

[23]Hospitibus autem cui non praecipitur ullatenus societur neque colloquatur; [24]sed si obviaverit aut viderit, salutatis humiliter, ut diximus, et petita benedictione pertranseat, dicens sibi non licere colloqui cum hospite.

RB 53: THE RECEPTION OF GUESTS

1. All guests who arrive should be received as Christ, for he himself will say, *I was a stranger and you took me in.* 2. Proper respect should be shown to *all, especially fellow monks and pilgrims.*

3. So, as soon as a guest is announced, the superior or the brothers should hurry to meet him with every mark of love. 4. First they should pray together and then be united in peace. 5. The kiss of peace should not be given unless prayer has come first, on account of the wiles of the devil.

6. The greeting itself, however, ought to manifest complete humility toward guests who are arriving or departing: by an inclination of the head or by a complete prostration on the ground, one must adore Christ in them, for he is in fact the one who is received. 8. When they have been received, the guests should be led to prayer, and afterward the superior or his appointee should sit with them. 9. Let the Divine Law be read to the guest for edification, and after that he should be shown every sort of kindness.

10. The superior should break the fast on behalf of the guest, unless it be a principal fast day that cannot be violated. 11. The brothers, however, should keep the customary fasts. 12. The abbot should pour water on the hands of the guests. 13. The abbot as well as the whole congregation should wash the feet of all guests. 14. When they have been washed, let them pray this verse: *We have received, O God, your mercy in the midst of your temple.*

15. The greatest care should be exhibited in the reception of the poor and pilgrims, for Christ is more especially received in them; for the very fear of the rich wins them respect.

16. The kitchen of the abbot and the guests ought to be separate so that the guests, who are never in short supply in the monastery and who tend to arrive at odd hours, will not disturb the brothers. 17. Two brothers who can fulfill this task well should work in this kitchen for a year at a time. 18. Let help be given them as they need it so they may serve without complaint. On the other hand, when they have less to do, they should go out to work where they are assigned. 19. This principle pertains not only to them but to all officials in the monastery: 20. When they need help they should get it, but when they are unoccupied they should do what they are told.

21. A brother who is full of the fear of God should be assigned to the guest quarters. 22. A sufficient number of beds should be made up there. And the house of God should be wisely managed by wise persons.

23. Those who are not assigned to the guests are not to visit or speak with them. 24. But if one meets or sees guests, he should greet them

humbly, as we said. One should ask for a blessing and then move on, explaining that it is not permitted to converse with a guest.

RB 53 Notes

RB 53 uses material from four different chapters of RM: 65,71,72,79. The basic spirit of Benedict's chapter, however, is quite different from that of the Master, who is extremely suspicious toward guests. For his part, Benedict is imbued with the spirit of Christian hospitality (vv. 1-15), but he still exercises a good deal of prudent caution so as to protect the community (vv. 16-24). Since it speaks of praying and eating with guests, this chapter finds a natural place just after the chapters on the refectory and the oratory (Lentini, 458). See Kardong, 27.195-207.

1.

All (omnes) is the first word in the Latin sentence, and the spirit of inclusivity is certainly characteristic of Jesus. By the second sentence, however, Benedict will begin to qualify this openness in view of various practical and doctrinal considerations. In general, the chapter begins on a positive and welcoming note, but it ends in a much less cheerful way. See Kardong, 195. Certainly the Rule of the Master has no intention of receiving "all persons": in fact, only clerics and monks are welcome in that monastery. Hospitality is a bedrock monastic principle, overarching as it does all the various forms of monastic life: Pachomius, *pr.* 51–54; Basil, *reg.* 32–33; *reg. iv patr.* 2.36-42; *reg. ii patr.* 14–16; Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 38; *vit. patr. Jur.* 172. None of these Rules, however, propose to receive *all* guests.

who arrive (supervenientes) can imply a surprise visit, and indeed it seems that this chapter is more about those travelers who arrive unexpectedly than guests who come for a planned visit. *Supervenire* also appears in 42.10, where guests arrive after Compline and therefore cause some disturbance in the night silence. In Benedict's time of poor communications and a lack of hotels and inns, monasteries were often the only place where one could find a safe place to stay for the night.

guests (hospites) could also be translated "strangers," as it surely must be in the quote from Matthew 25:35 that follows. Of course Jesus' point has to do with those who are in need of hospitality and not honored guests who command shelter by their power or prestige (see 48.15 on rich guests). Nevertheless, the term *hospites* does suggest that the traveler intends to stay for some time and is not just passing through (Lentini, 459). See *Index:* Hospitality.

took me in (suscepistis). It is probably no accident that Benedict has replaced the Vulgate term *collegistis* at this point. This term will be used

again in 53.14 where the monks give thanks to God for having received the gift of the guest. And of course *suscipe* is the famous word used at monastic profession (58.21). See Kardong, 27.197; see *Index:* Receive.

be received (suscipiantur) is one of the keywords of this chapter, with seven appearances (53T,1[bis],7,8,14,15). It seems to form an inclusion in vv. 1,15, with an internal repetition at v. 7. "To receive" means to cherish, not capture (Böckmann, 12.138). Likewise, the monk is "received" at profession so that he can then "receive" others in hospitality.

2.

proper respect (congruus honor) is somewhat ambiguous since it may mean that everyone is to be respected in the inclusive spirit of Matthew 25, or it could indicate that each one is to be treated according to one's station in life. The latter meaning is not as edifying, of course, but it may be the right one. At any rate, that is the way the earliest commentators on RB interpreted the text. Vogüé, 17.129-138, thinks that "proper" refers to the Christians and the pilgrims spoken of in the rest of the sentence. He notes that Benedict has created the saying "Honor all persons" in 4.8, and that he shows a good deal of concern for the poor in RB 31 and 66. Due to the great difference in lifestyle between the rich and the poor in ancient times, it was probably not possible to treat them all the same. At St. Gall, for example, there were two separate guest facilities for nobles and peasants (Horn and Born, 139–168). See Kardong, 23.200-207; *Index:* Honor.

fellow monks (domesticis fidei). This term, which is drawn from Galatians 6:10, has multiple possibilities. Certainly it does not imply that Benedict also accepted non-Christian guests, a thing unthinkable in that pre-ecumenical age. It may refer to Orthodox over against Arian Christians, since the Goths were Arians and they were certainly on the move in Italy at the time of Benedict. But probably *domestici fidei* is a technical term for "monks," which is the way it is used by Jerome, *ep.* 130.7,14, and Cassian, *inst.* 4.5 (Lentini, 460; Vogüé, 17.135). See *Index:* Faith, Honor.

pilgrims (peregrinis) can mean any foreigner (OLD, s.v.), but in Christian parlance it meant a pilgrim to a sacred shrine. No doubt this is Benedict's meaning, since it would be a good pair with "monks" and it would also explain why they get special treatment. See Kardong, 23.203.

3.

At this point, it appears that RB 53 is modeled on a traditional hospitality motif that is ultimately rooted in Genesis 18. In that lovely story, Abraham is visited by three men in the desert; so assiduous is he

in his performance of the sacred duty of hospitality that he races out to meet them, falls down to do them homage and begs them to do him the honor of staying for a meal. Here we see the Bedouin hospitality at its finest: the host declares himself blessed by the gift of the guest. The theological message is that true hospitality is in fact the loving reception of God. In Genesis, God returns the favor by giving Sarah and Abraham a child, a point that Chrysostom emphasizes in his beautiful homily on this text (PG 53.378f.).

Benedict has probably made use of the Abraham story as it exists in the monastic travelogue entitled *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*. In *hist. mon.* 7, the hermits of Scetis greet their monastic visitors in much the same fashion as Abraham. The key vocabulary that runs through all three layers is: *occurrere* and *adorare*. See Kardong, 27.200-203.

hurry to meet (occurratur ei). Most translators simply have "meet," which is technically accurate, but does not reflect the spirit of this text. The verb *occurrere* means to come forth gladly, not grudgingly (Böckmann, 12.138). In Genesis 18 and HM 7, the hosts run to meet the guests, so why should they not here? The reason is, of course, that the dignity of the abbot seems to preclude such unseemly behavior. But that is also the reason why RB 27.5 (see note) has been toned down by most translators. It is probably irrelevant here to speak of the porter summoning the brothers and of the *officium* of the guestmaster (Lentini, 462) since this material really comes from the semi-eremitical world of *Historia monachorum*. In such a context, the monks were free to respond directly to guests; in the world of organized cenobitism, of course, such a response would be out of the question: hence RB 53.16-24, with its severe restrictions on contact between monks and guests. See *Index:* Run.

marks (officio) probably refers to cordial words and facial expressions rather than concrete acts of hospitality. These latter will be described in the succeeding verses, but the former are extremely important for the morale of the guest. Anyone who has arrived at a monastery in need of a warm welcome knows how devastating a cold shoulder can be. The duty of caring for the physical needs of the guest actually counts for little if it is carried out in an insensitive manner.

superior (priore) is a clue that Benedict is dependent here on the earlier monastic tradition. Sometimes he uses the term *prior* in the ancient sense to mean the main superior (e.g., 6.7; 13.12; 20.5) and sometimes it means the second in command (RB 65). See Manning, 136. See *Index:* Prior.

4.

First (primitus) need not be taken as a throwaway word, for it can

emphasize the primacy of the spiritual in the dealings of monks with outsiders. Nowhere does Benedict repudiate the principle of withdrawal from the world, which requires that a protective membrane be maintained around the community (see RB 66 and 67). When this barrier is physically opened up to admit a visitor, it is still kept in place by subtler means: the guest is received on the monastery's terms and not his or her own. When the monks put aside their religious character to deal secularly with seculars, then the enclosure is breached and true monastic hospitality is falsified.

united (socientur) is a very strong word, indicating a union of comrades *(socii).* Benedict sometimes uses it to mean incorporation into the monastic community (61.6,8), but it does not mean that here. It can still mean a spiritual bond on a deep level. In other words, the hospitality offered to strangers should not be a merely superficial crossing of paths but a real sharing of spiritual gifts. See Böckmann, 12.138.

5.

unless prayer come first (nisi oratione praemissa) must mean that the prayer itself would function as a kind of litmus test of orthodoxy. This would be a means of detecting Arian Christians, with whom one could not exchange the kiss of peace. The "testing prayer" is also seen in RM 71.5-7, which is no doubt the source of RB 53.4-5. The social circumstances of the Master were probably similar to those of Benedict, whereas there is not much concern with heresy in *Historia monachorum*. See *Index:* Prayer.

because of the wiles of the devil (propter illusiones diabolicas). Apparently Benedict had bad experience with troublesome persons infiltrating his monastery, so much so that he could interpret it as a diabolic attack. It is possible to interpret this remark in the light of the numerous satanic attacks on Benedict in Gregory, *dial.* 2 (e.g., 2.20), but since the devil is seldom mentioned in RB, I do not think it is warranted to put much weight on this verse. See Kardong, 10.8. *Hist. mon.* 60 warns the monk not to be taken in by demonic phantasms and especially those that flatter the host. In fact, the theme of diabolical phantasms is common in the literature of the early Eastern monks. See *Index:* Devil.

It is a mistake to think that monks are automatically on the side of Christ and that the hostile outside world is on the other side. It could be the other way around (see Huerre, 256–257).

6.

The greeting itself, however (In ipsa autem salutatione) seems to indicate that only after one has determined the status of the guests does

one actually greet them. But then, despite the initial wariness, one displays all humility. The ablative of manner has been converted into a subject in order to smooth the translation.

manifest . . . humility (exhibeatur humilitas). Borias, 9.3-16, notes that this expression is much like *exhibeatur humanitas* two lines below. He thinks that Benedict's basic inspiration was Augustine, *ep.* 355, which shares several terms with RB 53.9 and 11. But Benedict has added a characteristic personal twist to the material by making humility the basis of humanity (food). Thus he returns to his main theme that hospitality should be based on faith in the divine presence encountered in the guest. See *Index:* Humility.

should be shown (exhibeatur) occurs three times in the first section of this chapter: vv. 2,6,15. It is part of a carefully constructed double inclusion (see note 53.15).

7.

a complete prostration on the ground (prostrato omni corpore in terra). This was the manner in which the Egyptian hermits greeted the author of the *hist. mon.* 7. The gesture of prostration can signal repentance for sin (44.1; 71.8) or a more general submission to the power of God and the benevolence of the community (58.23; 67.3). It is possible that the term *incumbere* in 4.56 (see note) also means to prostrate in silent prayer. The Church employs this powerful symbolic gesture of full prostration in a few liturgical ceremonies: Good Friday; ordination; solemn vows. See *Index:* Prostration.

for he is in fact the one who is received (qui et suscipitur). The juxtaposition of the subjunctive main verb ("must adore") with the indicative ("is received") makes the point nicely. It is a reiteration of the great lesson of Matthew 25:35: "You received ME." Note that this verse repeats several words from 53.1 and 15, thus forming a reprise of the main theme: Christ is received in the guest. See *Index:* Accept.

8.

When they have been received (Suscepti). *Suscipere* appears no less than seven times in this chapter and must be considered a leitmotif. The profound implications of this usage comes clear in v. 14.

to prayer (ad orationem) probably also means "to the oratory" (Lentini, 464). The guest is being led deeper into the building and also into the life of the community. Even though guests are not allowed into the enclosure, to pray with the monks is to penetrate to the very center of their life. Holzherr, 258, thinks that this prayer is the Hour of the Divine Office directly before the meal, but if that were the case, then

the guest could not participate, for the intricate Latin Office was virtually unintelligible to lay people. See *Index:* Prayer.

sit (sedeat) may mean "sit down to table," since there is a good chance that *humanitas* (v. 9) in fact means a meal; there is talk of breaking the fast in v. 9 as well. Like most translators, I hesitate to determine the text. In RM 84.1, etc., *sedere* does mean "sit at table," and Benedict uses the verb for sitting to listen to holy reading (9.5; 42.3). Probably there is a reading in the guest dining room prior to a meal. See Vogüé, 2.613.

9.

Divine Law (lex divina) is also found in 64.9 and must refer to Scripture. Although it may seem strange by modern standards to make the guest listen to holy reading before getting fed, this is perfectly consistent with Benedict's determination to let the guests know they are in a different realm from the one they just left.

kindness (humanitas). As Vogüé shows in 2.678, Cassian normally uses this term to denote a meal, but he sometimes uses it in a broader sense to indicate general corporal hospitality. A. Fracheboud, 59–74, shows that it encompasses all that is truly human, including the spiritual.

10.

break the fast (Jejunium . . . frangatur). From its earliest origins, monasticism considered hospitality so important as to override asceticism. This is made clear in many stories in the lives of the desert monks and in this quote from Cassian (*inst.* 5.24): "The fast I always have with me. You I must soon release and I will not be able to retain you. If the fast is good and necessary, it is still a free-will offering. On the other hand, the commandment of love (hospitality) is absolute. Since I receive Christ in you, I must also feed him. When I let you depart, I can replace the hospitality I extended to you with a rigorous personal fast." Quoted in Holzherr, 258. See *Index:* Fast.

To judge from 53.10, it seems likely that the guests ate apart from the general community (RB 56). Therefore, Holzherr's thesis (note 53.7) does not seem to apply. RM 72.1-7 discusses at length the case of visiting monks who must leave early: they should never be sent away hungry.

principal fast day (praecipuus . . . dies jejunii) probably refers to the fast days of the Great Church and the Wednesday and Friday fasts regularly observed by the monks. What could be set aside would be

the mid-afternoon time for meals during winter; that is, the guests could be fed earlier. See Lentini, 465.

11.
the brothers (fratres). The bending of the Rule for guests should not be allowed to disrupt community life (RB 56).

12.
the abbot (abbot). In 53.3,8,10, the superior is called *prior,* but in vv. 12 and 13 he is called *abbas*. In the view of Borias, 9.3-16, this is a sign that vv. 12-13 are a later interpolation. Only *abbas* appears in the second part of the chapter (16-24).

13.
wash the feet (pedes . . . lavet). The washing of the feet of a guest was standard procedure in ancient times (see Luke 7:44), but Benedict gives it a particularly solemn context since the entire community is to participate. Conversely, the table-servers are to wash the feet of the entire community (see note 35.9). According to Sulpicius Severus, *Mart.* 25, St. Martin of Tours washed the feet of guests in the evening; that is also the likely time for Benedict's ceremony (Lentini, 467).

Apparently, some monasteries still observe this custom by washing the feet of postulants beginning their novitiate (Lentini, 466).

14.
We have received, O God, your mercy in the midst of your temple (Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio templi tui). Far from being a mere pious backdrop, this psalm verse is used in a very meaningful and pointed way. In this context, "your mercy" could refer to the guest, who is considered the gift of God, much in the same way as in Genesis 18:3, where Abraham begs the three men for the *favor* of dining with him. But there is more: *suscipere* has unmistakable overtones for the monk, since this is the prayer one sings at profession: "Receive me, O Lord, according to your promise that I may live." Here in 53.14, the monks recall that they, too, have been received as guests by the Lord: that is the "mercy" they have received from God (see Borias, 12.56-67): therefore they must extend the same hospitality to the traveler. It is one of the most effective uses of a psalm verse in the entire Rule. The verb *suscipere* is very frequent in both this chapter and in the one on the novices: 53T,1,7,8,14,15; 58T,14,16,17,21.

15.
the poor (pauperum) are mentioned here for the first time, although they were obviously the ones who most need the hospitality of the

monks. And in fact, before the development of social institutions in modern times, monasteries were the principal care giver for the needy throughout Europe. See *Index:* Poor.

fear (terror). Benedict carefully distinguishes between *timor* and *terror,* the former meaning religious awe and wonder, while the latter refers to natural fear of harmful things. This text and 2.24 are the only ones where *terror* appears, but *timor* is very common in the Rule. See Kardong, 8.34. The power of the rich is not necessarily evil, but it is not a religious motive for respect. See Kardong, 23.202-203; see *Index:* Fear, Honor.

According to Borias, 9.3-16, RB 53.15 is a repetition of 53.1-2 *(exhibeatur; Christus suscipitur; honor)* and therefore forms an inclusion. This reinforces the main theme (receive everyone, and especially the poor, as Christ) and also demarcates vv. 1-15 as the original literary unit. In Borias' view, this means that vv. 16-24 are a later addition. Further, he considers vv. 12-14 to be a later addition, which may explain why the washing comes after the eating (*humanitas,* v. 9).

16.

From here on, the chapter takes on a much more pragmatic and even fussy tone compared to the rather sublime teaching of 53.1-15. While it is possible that this material was added later by Benedict when his movement had grown large, and a more systematic approach to things was necessary, still I do not agree with Holzherr, 259, that there is little that is theological about this last section. At least there are multiple references to rich spiritual themes in vv. 1-15, or to other parts of the Rule.

separate (super se). This arrangement fits well with the provision in 53.1-15 that the abbot is to eat with the guests at whatever hour is convenient.

may not disturb the brothers (fratres non inquietentur). Although the subject of the purpose clause must be brothers, the nominative absolute *supervientes hospites* (the arriving guests) has been made the subject in order to make a readable English sentence. To judge from 48.5, Benedict does not consider *inquietare* to be a deponent verb.

never in short supply (numquam desunt) at least not at Monte Cassino, which is the main highway between Rome and Naples (Lentini, 469).

17.

who can do this work well (qui ipsud officium bene impleant), perhaps in contrast to the regular monastic cooks, who work a week at a time and may have no particular aptitude for the task. This, and the stipu-

lation that they work a year at a time in the guest kitchen, indicates that Benedict wishes to systematize this department to the point where guests are very well cared for. Manning, 138, questions whether a small monastery could have afforded two such kitchens, but the text seems to call for it. This may indicate that Benedict's monastery had reached a good size by the time the second part of this chapter was written. See *Index:* Work.

To say that the guest cooks are to be expert does not mean the food served there should be other than ordinary. In fact, St. Basil insists that the guests should eat the same as the monks: If they are themselves monks, they will recognize their own diet; if they are seculars, they will learn something about frugality; if they are not content, they will not come back (*reg. fus.* 20, paraphrase of Lentini, 469). One might add, though, the monks often ate better than the surrounding peasantry.

18.

help (solacium). A favorite theme of Benedict is the need to provide adequate help for workers. For the special flavor of *solacium,* see note 35.3. See *Index:* Help.

where they are assigned (ubi eis imperatur). This apparently banal comment is in fact quite revealing. Even though Benedict sets up an organized guest department, he does not mean to create a specialized work force that is not subject to regular monastic discipline. In fact, when departments become quasi-independent, the spirit of cenobitic community is undermined. The author considers this precept so important that he spends the next two verses elaborating it as a cardinal principle of cenobitic life.

complaint (murmuratione) is a serious fault for Benedict, but here he comes close to admitting that it may be justified. If people are not given what they need to carry out their duties, they are not at fault but rather those who fail to supply the need. See *Index:* Murmuring.

principle (consideratio). The word can mean "kindness" as it does in 34.2 and 37.3, but here it seems to refer to a general rule to be followed. In 8.1 and 55.3, the word has yet a third meaning: discretion.

officials (officiis) could also mean "tasks."

21.

who is full of the fear of God (cuius animam timor Dei possidet), literally, "whose soul the fear of God possesses." This strong expression is entirely typical of Benedict, who insists that monastic officials be especially marked by "the fear of the Lord." Thus the cellarer (31.2), the

nurse (36.7), the guest-director (53.21) and the porter (66.4) all need to be motivated by the considerations of Christian faith rather than worldly wisdom. This is especially true since all of them need to be at the service of others who are in a position of relative helplessness and need the charity of Christ shown them. See *Index:* Fear.

be assigned to the guest quarters (cellam . . . habeat assignatam). A periphrastic construction that says literally "have the guest quarters assigned to him." This is no part-time or rotational post, but a special monastic office to be carried out on a full-time basis.

22.

beds should be made up (lecti strati). The point seems to be that this department should always be ready for travelers, who arrive at strange hours and are often fatigued from the journey. Thus long delays in preparing the guesthouse are a hardship for them.

wisely managed by wise persons (sapientibus et sapienter). Both the cellarer (31.2) and the porter (66.1) are also supposed to be wise. In all three cases, the wisdom needed is not theoretical but in the service of practical charity. This is not to deny, though, that in a given monastic situation, the guestmaster may do much good in the form of spiritual counsel. The term "managed" *(administretur)* is important, for it contrasts with proprietorship: God is the owner of the house; the monks merely manage it. See *Index:* Steward, Wisdom.

house of God (domus Dei) may refer here to the guest quarters, but Benedict sometimes uses it to mean the whole monastery (31.19 and 64.5). *Domus Dei* is a biblical term that can refer to the Hebrew people (Num 12:7); it is used by patristic writers to refer to the church building (Council of Carthage, IV; can. 91) or the Christian Church (1 Tim 3:15). See Blaise, s.v. In this verse, the term has the effect of reminding the guest workers that they are not just running a hotel, but a sacred hospice where the person is cared for as a child of God. In later times, French hospitals were called *hôtel-Dieu*. See *Index:* House of God.

23.

not to visit or speak with them (ullatenus societur neque conloquatur). This seemingly harsh restriction, which seems quite out of harmony with the spirit of the first half of the chapter, may have useful application even in our time. On the one hand, monasteries that are overrun by guests need to protect their monks from the curious; no one comes to the monastery to live in a goldfish bowl or to be part of a theme park. On the other hand, there are garrulous monks who do not find enough sympathetic ears in the community; guests who come to the

monastery for solitude ought not to have to provide that kind of listening service. Pachomius, *pr.* 50, and Basil, *reg. fus.* 32–33, were well aware that not all monks are well suited to deal with guests. Yet it is still hard to avoid the feeling that this chapter ends on a rather sour note, after starting out with such a burst of good will. See Kardong, 27.206.

as we have said (ut diximus) that is, in 53.6.

ask for a blessing (petita benedictione) not from false humility, but as a consequence of the theology implied in 53.14 (see note). RM 87.3-4 makes a great point of forbidding visiting priests to ask simple monks for blessings because the latter are not in a position to give such a thing. It is possible that Benedict is chipping away at that kind of hierarchical mentality in this verse: monks should seek blessings from anyone whom God sends to them, ordained or not.

RB 53 Overview

Benedict's treatise on hospitality is one of the best-known and best-loved chapters in the entire Rule. Some of the reason for this is due to the subsequent history of Benedictine monasteries, which were the hostels of Europe during the early medieval period. But the chapter itself is remarkable for its enthusiasm and even eagerness to receive travelers and pilgrims in the spirit of the gospel.

A. Benedict over against His Sources

Whence does Benedict derive his openness toward guests? When we look to his usual source, namely, the Rule of the Master, we have to doubt if that Rule has much influence on RB 53. While it is true that some of the chapters of RM such as 65,71 and 72 are fairly humane toward outsiders who come to stay, there are also chapters which are positively hostile toward guests.

RM 78 and 79 show the Master at his worst, suspicious of the other, worried about theft of monastic goods, convinced that every visitor is potentially out to bilk the community through laziness or greed. These are some of the hardest parts of the RM to swallow, and we can only be thankful that Benedict had the good sense to go his separate way. That is not to say that RB 53 is totally free of suspicion, but it does not degenerate into the venality and paranoia we see in RM 78. See Vogüé, 6.1260.

Nevertheless, Benedict does retain many of the formal aspects of the Master's hospitality, such as the initial prayer and kiss of peace. These,

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Nevertheless, Benedict does retain many of the formal aspects of the Master's hospitality, such as the initial prayer and kiss of peace. These,

of course, were standard rituals in ancient culture, and their absence in RB would be unthinkable. But Benedict has also added his own emphases, to give a distinctive flavor to his chapter. Thus he incorporates the custom of listening to Scripture with the guest before the meal (53.9), perhaps from *reg. iv patr.* 2.41-42. And he brings back the ancient custom of having the superior and the brothers wash the feet of the guest (53.13) which was in use in the Pachomian monasteries (*pr.* 51). See Vogüé, 6.1264. However, the most important innovations of Benedict lie in the theological realm, which we will discuss in Part C.

Probably the main literary influence on Benedict for this chapter is a curious monastic travelogue called *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*. Whether directly or through the Master, Benedict has drawn his main imagery and vocabulary for this chapter from the desert monks. In *hist. mon.* 7, the unknown author (Rufinus?) describes the welcome his party received at the monastery of Abba Apollos in Lower Egypt. Upon their arrival, the monks came running to greet them, brought them to the Abba, who prostrated before them and then prayed with them before giving them the kiss of peace. It can hardly be a coincidence that Benedict uses some of the same vocabulary to describe the greeting that he wishes his monks to extend to guests (see notes 53.3 and 53.7).

There seems to be little question that Benedict has chosen to incorporate the ancient theme of desert hospitality into his Rule. That theme receives memorable expression in the marvelous story of Abraham and the three angels in Genesis 18, and later patristic writers such as John Chrysostom (*Gen. hom.* 41) were able to exploit the theological depths of the story (see Kardong, 27.201). The literature of the Egyptian Desert Fathers shows that those hermits considered hospitality one of their main duties.

Yet it must also be recalled that Benedict is not writing a Rule for anchorites but for cenobites. The scene that he paints in the first half of this chapter would be more in place in a semi-anchoritic colony, where everyone is free to respond directly to a guest. In an organized cenobium, however, such is not the case. And that is the reason why RB 53 must eventually come down from the heights of exultation over the guest and deal with the practicalities of the situation. Thus 53.16-24 is a good deal more sober and down-to-earth, speaking as it does of the organization of large-scale hospitality.

B. Literary Structure

The move from exalted and inspired *agape* to practical detail is also echoed in the very structure of the chapter. The first fifteen verses are

bounded by a very clear repetition of elements which occurs three times at verses 1,6-7 and 15 where the terms *Christus, suscipere* and *exhibere* are repeated in different configurations. Not only does this create a well-knit literary unit, but it hammers home the main point: all guests are to be received as Christ. See Borias, 5.38ff. Another term that interlaces the whole first section is *omnes* (all), which occurs no less than seven times.

Compared to the well-constructed formal unity and the profound spiritual development of 53.1-15, the second part of the chapter is rather disappointing. There is little sense of structure in vv. 16-24, which consist of a somewhat pedestrian discussion of how to run a guest department. It could be, however, that the great elán of the first part inevitably puts the second part in the shade. Both Vogüé, 6.1265, and Borias, 5.38-55, think that this material was added later, probably under the pressure of long experience with guests. It could be that the spontaneous, free-form hospitality of Part I was only possible as long as the community was small; once it grew and guests became numerous, then more careful arrangements had to be made.

Nevertheless, it is not quite right to say that Part I is a treatise of purely elevated spiritual openness, while Part II is devoid of genuine religious feeling. For example, after stating that "all" are to be received as Christ, Benedict immediately begins to qualify this dictum: one must be sure they are orthodox Christians and not the agents of Satan (53.5). And the term "proper" (*congruus;* see note 53.2) respect often led commentators to conclude that one must treat rich guests different from poor ones (see Vogüé, 17.126).

What is more, Part II does indeed contain some vintage themes of Benedict that cannot be disregarded: (1) Help should be given to those entrusted to a department. (2) The guest-director should be marked by fear of God and wisdom. (3) Brothers are not to become so specialized that they will not help out wherever they are needed. (4) The posture of the monk before the guest is one of humility and receptivity: the monk asks the guest for a blessing.

C. Spiritual Roots of Hospitality

Thus far we have described RB 53 as a curiously bifurcated essay on hospitality, which begins with unreserved welcome for all, but ends with a good deal more caution toward the outsider. We have seen that the reason for this polarity is partly an instability caused by reliance on an anchoritic ideal for a cenobitic topic. Yet it is also true that the very subject of monastic hospitality harbors an inherent ambiguity.

Böckmann, 12.131-144, analyzes this polarity as follows: On the one hand, the monk by definition is one who has become a *xenos*, a

stranger to the world. Furthermore, he has fled the world and does not wish to know of the world (see RB 61 and 67). Even though this theme of *fuga mundi* is not nearly as strong in Benedict's Rule as in, say, the Desert Fathers, it is still a constitutive part of all monasticism. See note 4.20.

On the other hand, Jesus himself was quite open to the world around him, and especially to those who found themselves ostracized and marginalized by society. His meal customs seem to be symbolic of this entire attitude, for he accepted invitations from unacceptable tax-collectors like Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), as well as from the Pharisees (Luke 7:36-50). In fact, it was probably his refusal to observe the taboos of Jewish society that eventually caused his execution.

Since Christian monks are bound to live by the ethic of Jesus, how can we reconcile this with our flight from the world? For if we are serious monks, it is also inevitable that the world will find us spiritually attractive and wish to know more about us. How can we reconcile these apparently contradictory elements in our own vocation? No matter how we think of it, there will always be tensions, but it does seem that RB 53 offers a helpful angle of vision.

The most obvious theological principle, of course, is emblazoned at the very head of the chapter in the saying of Jesus quoted from Matthew 25: "I was a stranger and you took me in." From this point of view, every visitor is at least a potentially divine visitor. To quote Hebrews 13:2, "people have entertained angels unknowingly," but the Christian should *expect* to encounter Christ in the stranger and wayfarer.

We have suggested elsewhere (see notes for 7.10-13) that the spiritual core of the Rule of Benedict seems to lie in the constant awareness of the holiness of God. What is more, this same God is powerfully present to the monk at all times so that fear of the Lord is the ordinary atmosphere of the monastery. What is even clearer throughout the RB is that the holy God is encountered in the weakest and most needy persons that one meets. To judge from RB 53, the visiting stranger is precisely one of those persons. See Kardong, 3.85.

Therefore, it is not surprising that RB 53.6 instructs the monk to receive the guest "with all humility," and indeed with a full prostration of the body (53.7) as before a sacred personage. The full bow acknowledges Christ in the other, but the sense of humility is a reflex: who am I in the presence of the Holy One? Borias, 9.3-16, remarks that while St. Augustine grounds his teaching on hospitality in the need to *love* the neighbor, Benedict bases his on *faith* in the divine presence in the other.

The same theology can be seen through another optic, namely the concept *domus Dei,* the house of God. In 53.22, Benedict notes that "the

house of God should be administered wisely by wise people." According to this text, the monastery itself is called "house of God," and it is the monks who are to administer it. Note, however, that the monks do not *own* this house; they are merely put in charge of it on behalf of the real owner, who is God.

The point is made even more forcibly in RB 53.14, where the monks sing a psalm verse after washing the feet of guests: "We have received, O God, your mercy in the midst of your temple" (Ps 48:10). We might be tempted to treat this psalm verse as mere liturgical window-dressing if it were not for the fact that Benedict has slightly altered the text as it appears in RM 65.9: He has changed the tense from present to past, and made "mercy" singular instead of plural (see note 53.14).

Could it not be that Benedict wishes the community to be well aware of its own humble status as "strangers and guests" in the house of the Lord? The language here almost forces us to remember our profession, when we prayed "Receive me, O Lord, according to your promise, and I shall live." The Lord responded to that plea by receiving *(suscipere)* us into his house; that is the "mercy" we received, and its effects are enduring, for we remain the houseguests of the Lord.

Consequently, when we extend hospitality to a stranger, we are not acting out of the magnanimity that the landowner proffers to the landless traveler. As monastic stewards of the *domus Dei,* we are merely extending the merciful hospitality that the Lord once showed us. At a deeper level, we are offering the reconciliation that Christ himself once won for us on the wood of the cross. "You who had no part in Christ and were excluded from the community of Israel, you who were strangers to the covenant and its promise; you were without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (Eph 2:12-13, NAB).

This, then, is the theological teaching of RB 53 and it is an impressive one, yet there remains the practical problem of implementing this high theology in the real world. Regarding monastic hospitality, no doubt each community finds itself in different circumstances. The demands of an extremely heavy guest ministry may require the monks to jealously guard their cloister if they are not to be drowned in a sea of visitors (as at Taizé). Or a remote abbey may find it possible to welcome its few guests to almost all phases of community life without endangering the contemplative solitude of the monks. However the practicalities are managed, it must always be kept in mind that the welcoming gospel of Jesus precedes the *fuga mundi* of the monk. Otherwise, we will not be in a good position to answer the question: "I was a stranger: did you take me in?"

LIV: SI DEBEAT MONACHUS LITTERAS VEL ALIQUID SUSCIPERE

[1]Nullatenus liceat monacho neque a parentibus suis neque a quoquam hominum nec sibi invicem litteras, eulogias vel quaelibet munuscula accipere aut dare sine praecepto abbatis. [2]Quod si etiam a parentibus suis ei quicquam directum fuerit non praesumat suscipere illud, nisi prius indicatum fuerit abbati. [3]Quod si iusserit suscipi, in abbatis sit potestate cui illud iubeat dari, [4]et non contristetur frater cui forte directum fuerat, *ut non detur occasio diabolo.* [5]Qui autem aliter praesumpserit, disciplinae regulari subiaceat.

RB 54: WHETHER A MONK OUGHT TO RECEIVE LETTERS OR ANYTHING ELSE

1. It is not permitted for monks to receive letters, pious gifts or little presents from their relatives or other people without abbatial approval; nor may they exchange them among themselves. 2. But even if a monk is sent anything by his relatives, he should not presume to accept it without first informing the abbot. 3. But if he commands that the gift be accepted, it is in the abbot's power to give it to whomever he orders. 4. The brother to whom it was sent should not be saddened, *in order not to give the devil an opening*. 5. However, whoever presumes to act otherwise should undergo the regular discipline.

RB 54 Notes

T

Although this chapter follows logically enough from the preceding one, which prohibited unauthorized visits with guests, it is in fact a substitute for RM 80, on the delicate subject of nocturnal pollution. Benedict's teaching on the topic of gifts and letters is largely drawn from Augustine, but most other Rules have similar prescriptions. The Latin title: *Si debeat monachus litteras vel aliquid suscipere* is one of four titles in RB that are framed as a *si*-clause. It is curious that RB 33–34, which are also about possessions, also have *si*-clause titles. The title for RB 54 given in the list that is given after the Prologue in most manuscripts is an *ut*-clause and it has the term *eulogias* (gifts) in place of *aliquid* (anything else). Although this chapter may seem rather niggling and paternalistic in the modern context, as an extension of RB 33–34 it is perfectly coherent with cenobitism. Since the members have all given everything to the community and therefore share in a poverty of

equality, for one person to be favored by family or friends can undermine the common spirit. See Manning, 140.

1.

nor may they exchange them among themselves (dare . . . sibi invicem). These words fit awkwardly into the Latin grammar and are probably added by a later hand (Vogüé, 2.617). To create a smoother translation, I have made the singular subject *(monachus)* plural.

pious gifts (eulogias) could also mean the unconsecrated bread of the Mass, which was sent out to the faithful in the early Church. In RM 76 it probably means the latter, but here Blaise, s.v., says it simply means gifts.

This verse is probably a direct quote from Augustine, *reg. serv.* 11.115-117, which also has the words *litteras vel quaelibet munuscula accipiat*. But Benedict omits Augustine's point that the letters are from a woman; the point in *reg. serv.* is to preserve chastity. For Benedict, however, the issue is poverty and the breaking off of contact with family and world. In fact, ancient families were much more powerful in their hold on members than is usual today; the struggle to detach a monk from his parents and attach him to his new community was a serious problem. Borias, 13.212, notes that although Benedict seems to take a hard line in this chapter, he in fact allows visits from family, while the Master does not. Even though Benedict's emphasis seems to be on abbatial rights, it is really directed to prevent the encroachment of the family on the monk's allegiance to the community.

Other monastic legislation on this issue is found in Basil, *reg*. 31; 98; 105; Pachomius, *pr.* 53; 106; *vit. Pach.* 28; Cassian, *inst.* 4.16,2; *reg. or*. 26; *vit. patr. Jur*. 172; Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 25; 43; 54 (Holzherr, 387). In *reg. virg*. 23, Caesarius of Arles enlarges on Augustine's text and indicates that the *eulogias* are blessed bread.

relatives (parentibus) could mean parents, but in colloquial Latin it often referred to the extended family, as Jerome testifies in *adv. Ruf.* 2.2 (Lentini, 476).

letter (litteras). Although it never squared with the American sense of privacy and freedom of expression, it was typical of pre-Vatican II novitiates to require that letters be left unsealed on sending. And they were opened by superiors upon receipt. Even though this has now been discarded as unseemly, the principle remains that there is a protective membrane around the monastery. It is the superior's right and duty to see that the individual and the community are protected from unlimited and unwarranted communication with the world outside.

While no one wishes to quibble about trifles, nor is the monastery a police state, it is still possible for a monk to gradually come to depend on outside sources of comfort or even income. When that happens, the nerve of monastic poverty and community is cut.

2.

sent (directum fuerit). Unlike the first verse, now the case is that of presents sent by the family and not delivered in person. Here, too, the monk is to consult the abbot. In the parallel verses in *reg. serv.* 12.140-144, Augustine speaks of the clandestine reception of presents. That could be the case in this verse as well, but it need not be.

presume (praesumat) is a familiar verb in the Rule, and always a pejorative one. Invariably it is a question of the usurpation of abbatial authority. In this case, one "presumes" permission at first, but later on the tendency is to "take over" one's life again and return to a position of autonomy. See *Index:* Presumption.

3.

to give it to whomever he orders (cui illud jubeat dari) could also be translated: "to order it be given to whomever he wishes." When it is put this way, the arrangement seems almost cruel: the monk must watch "his" gift be given to another. But when the cenobitic system is working properly, gifts are simply put in the common fund to be given to whoever has need. In this way RB 34 is carried out in practice: Distribution is made according to need. The element of necessity is explicit in *reg. serv.* 12.140-144: "But it should be in the power of the prior to give that which has been put into the common fund to whoever is in need."

he orders (jubeat). This verb seems somewhat redundant, and other translators usually remedy that by rendering it "wishes," but this solution has its problems as well. This verse should not be read as an invitation to the abbot to confiscate all gifts and then engage in a program of personal patronage. The abbot is not a Medici prince but rather a steward of the Lord's justice to the needy and the poor.

The arrangement whereby a Benedictine could receive a gift and then continue to administer its use or usufruct (interest) is not in line with the Rule and it is being discontinued. This was the result of the system of dowries for nuns, but since that system is no longer in place, all reason for this practice is gone.

4.

saddened (contristetur). It is probably no coincidence that this same verb is employed by Benedict in 34.3, which is also a discussion of the

just distribution of goods. In both cases, *tristia* will enter the scene if the monk does not have a solid grasp of the priorities of his vocation. If attachments to family or to material goods are still strong, then one's peace and joy are vulnerable to this kind of unhappiness. See *Index:* Sadness.

so as not to give the devil an opening (ut non detur occasio diabolo). This is the third time Benedict has quoted this passage from Ephesians 4:27 (38.8; 43.8). Since all three cases are rather different, there does not seem to be any special significance in this usage. Nor does the reference to the devil indicate any particular interest on the part of Benedict in that evil force. See Kardong, 10.8.

5.

This verse does not connect with the previous one about sadness, but with the previous one concerning the need to submit gifts to the discernment of authority.

regular discipline (disciplinae regulari) is often mentioned by Benedict and it could refer to either a regular system of penalties, or else the "penal code" of the Rule itself (RB 23–30; 43–46). Nevertheless, the appearance of a complete system of penalties in RB is largely illusory. See Gomez, 241–244; Vogüé, 5.781-785; see *Index:* Discipline.

LV: DE VESTIARIO VEL CALCIARIO FRATRUM

[1]Vestimenta fratribus secundum locorum qualitatem ubi habitant vel aërum temperiem dentur, [2]quia in frigidis regionibus amplius indigetur, in calidis vero minus. [3]Haec ergo consideratio penes abbatem est. [4]Nos tamen mediocribus locis sufficere credimus monachis per singulos cucullam et tunicam—[5]cucullam in hieme villosam, in aestate puram aut vetustam—[6]et scapulare propter opera, indumenta pedum pedules et caligas.

[7]De quarum rerum omnium colore aut grossitudine non causentur monachi, sed quales inveniri possunt in provincia qua degunt aut quod vilius comparari possit. [8]Abbas autem de mensura provideat ut non sint curta ipsa vestimenta utentibus ea, sed mensurata.

[9]Accipientes nova, vetera semper reddant in praesenti reponenda in vestiario propter pauperes. [10]Sufficit enim monacho duas tunicas et duas cucullas habere propter noctes et propter lavare ipsas res; [11]iam quod supra fuerit superfluum est, amputari debet. [12]Et pedules et quodcumque est vetere reddant dum accipiunt novum.

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[13]Femoralia hi qui in via diriguntur de vestario accipiant, quae revertentes lota ibi restituant. [14]Et cucullae et tunicae sint aliquanto a solito quas habent modice meliores; quas exeuntes in via accipiant de vestiario et revertentes restituant.

[15]Stramenta autem lectorum sufficiant matta, sagum et lena, et capitale.

[16]Quae tamen lecta frequenter ab abbate scrutinanda sunt propter opus peculiare, ne inveniatur; [17]et si cui inventum fuerit quod ab abbate non accepit, gravissimae disciplinae subiaceat. [18]Et ut hoc vitium peculiaris radicitus amputetur, dentur ab abbate omnia quae sunt necessaria, [19]id est cuculla, tunica, pedules, caligas, bracile, cultellum, graphium, acum, mappula, tabulas, ut omnis auferatur necessitatis excusatio.

[20]A quo tamen abbate semper consideretur illa sententia Actuum Apostolorum, quia *dabatur singulis prout cuique opus erat.* [21]Ita ergo et abbas consideret infirmitates indigentium, non malum voluntatem invidentium; [22]in omnibus tamen iudiciis suis Dei retributionem cogitet.

RB 55: THE CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR OF THE BROTHERS

1. Clothing should be given to the brothers suitable to the circumstances and the climate of the place where they live, 2. for in cold regions more is needed, while less is necessary in warm ones. 3. Therefore the abbot should be sensitive to these matters. 4. For temperate climates, however, we think it is enough for each monk to have a cowl and a tunic. 5. There should be a thick cowl for winter and a worn or light one for summer. 6. One should also have an apron for work, and sandals and shoes to cover the feet.

7. The monks should not worry about the color or texture of these items, but simply use whatever they can find in the locality where they live, or what can be purchased more cheaply. 8. The abbot should watch for the size of the clothing so that it fits the wearers and is not too short.

9. When they receive new clothes, they immediately ought to return the old ones, which are to be kept in the wardrobe for the poor. 10. For it is enough for a monk to have two tunics and two cowls for a change at night and for washing these things. Whatever is beyond that is superfluous and should be taken away. 12. As regards sandals or anything else that is worn out, they should return them when they get new ones.

13. Those sent on a journey should receive pants from the clothes closet, and when they return they should wash them and put them back. 14. The cowls and tunics should be somewhat better than what

they usually have; when they set out on a journey, they should receive them from the wardrobe and when they come home they should return them.

15. For bedding, it will be enough to have a straw tick, a light blanket as well as a woolen one, and a pillow. 16. These beds should be frequently inspected by the abbot to see if private possessions are being hidden there. 17. And if someone is found to have something he has not received from the abbot, he should undergo very severe discipline. 18. But to completely root out this vice of private ownership, the abbot must provide people with everything they need: 19. that is, cowl, tunic, sandals, shoes, belt, knife, stylus, needle, handkerchief, writing tablets. This should remove all pretext of want.

20. Yet the abbot should always ponder the verse from the Acts of the Apostles: "Each person used to receive what was necessary" (Acts 4:35). 21. So the abbot should pay attention to the weaknesses of the needy and not the bad will of the envious. 22. But in all his decisions, he should remember the Judgment of God.

RB 55 Notes

RB 55.1-15 follows the basic outline of RM 81 on clothing and footwear. Likewise, St. Augustine, *reg. serv.* 5.1, who was quoted in RB 54, follows his prohibition against the clandestine acceptance of gifts with a passage on the need for monastic authority to supply the monks with what they need to live (RB 55.16-22).

T

clothing (vestiario) here means clothing, but in verses 9,13 and 14 it will mean wardrobe, that is, the place where the clothing is stored.

footwear (calciario). Lentini, 480, notes with some amusement that the famous *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* gives the meaning of this word in this text as "the money needed to buy footwear." That was the classical meaning of the word (OLD, s.v.) but obviously monks have no money to buy shoes.

1.

circumstances and climate of the place (locorum qualitatem . . . vel aerum temperiem). The seeming redundancy here may have been caused by the addition of the last words by a later scribe who found "circumstances" too vague. This provision for varied climates is a hint that the Rule may originally have been written for several monasteries. The practical wisdom shown by Benedict in regard to clothing is much like that shown in the chapters on food and drink (see 39.1-2; 40.2).

clothing (vestimenta). It is worth noting that this chapter says nothing about the monastic "habit." Even though there were discussions on the symbolic significance of the monastic habit in earlier texts (see Evagrius, *prak.* prol. 2–7, and Basil, *reg. fus.* 22–23), Benedict has nothing to contribute to that topic. He simply wants monks to have decent clothing without having to worry about procuring it for themselves. In our own times, the problem is much less simple, given the accumulation of tradition concerning the monastic habit, as well as other considerations which we will discuss below. For discussion of the monastic habit, see M. Augé; G. Colombas, 1.50-56.

Basil, *reg.* 11, claims that there is a distinctive *Christian* garb: "Let our clothing be common and the same for all alike. A mere glance should recognize a Christian. For the weak, a garment befitting a religious calling is like a leader; it also discourages the restless from unfaithful and disobedient behavior" (quoted by Holzherr, 265).

2.

cold regions . . . warm regions (frigidis . . . calidis). It is remarkable that those who have followed this eminently reasonable Rule (and other religious Rules) have so often ignored this principle and tried to impose alien clothing (among other things) on new foundations. One remembers monks and nuns sweltering under their heavy robes in torrid climates, or likewise freezing because their customary would not allow additional clothing or central heating.

Benedict's remark about cold and hot climates does not necessarily mean that he was thinking about places far from Monte Cassino. For example, it is considerably milder in Rome than it is in Subiaco and Monte Cassino, which are higher up and farther from the sea. For his part, the Master only discusses the need for different clothing in summer and winter (RM 81.25-30).

3.

sensitive (consideratio). The usual translation is "discretion" *(RB 1980)* or "judgment" (Lentini), but I think Vogüé (2.619) has it right with *appréciation* (French). Although *consideratio* can mean a decision (see OLD, s.v), that meaning does not seem to fit here if one takes account of *ergo* (therefore). The point is that since cold and heat demand different clothing, the abbot should be sensitive to the conditions and the reactions of the community and act accordingly. See *Index:* Consider.

abbot (abbas). The abbot is mentioned seven times in this chapter (3,8,16,17,18,20,21). In fact, the chapter is largely directed to that official, who is to provide the monks with all they need so they may be at

peace (RB 34) and not be corrupted by greed (RB 33). RB 34 is also addressed to the superior, but RB 33 and 34 are seen mostly from the standpoint of the monk, not the abbot. See *Index:* Abbot.

4.

we think (credimus). Even though he has given the abbot the discretion in this matter as in many others, Benedict still presents his own general principle on the dress of a monk. He does so diffidently, however, as in other places in the Rule: 18.22-25; 39.1-2; 40.2.

cowl (cucullam) is the large outer garment of the monk. The term literally means "little house," and it describes a loose bell-shaped cloak that might or might not have sleeves. Cassian, *inst.* 1.3, compares it to a child's mantle and hood, and says it symbolizes simplicity and innocence. In the course of the centuries, it was lengthened to the knees or feet. Today the cuculla is strictly a ceremonial garment, but in Benedict's time it was not. Rather, it was the cloak that was worn in all but the most private situations. See H. Leclercq, "Capuchon," 2,2.2127; *RB 1980,* 261, note 55.4.

tunic (tunicam) was a body-fitting garment, usually worn next to the skin. It corresponds to the present-day cassock of the monk, except that it probably ended only to the knees. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that the tunic was the ordinary garment of all grown males in the Late Roman Empire and in no way a clerical or liturgical garment. Although Benedict does not mention it, the tunic was normally gathered at the waist by a belt. Cassian, *inst.* 1.1, attaches great symbolic significance to the belt. See *RB 1980,* 261, note 55.4. Because of Luke 3:11, Basil, *reg*. 129, is very reluctant to allow monks more than one tunic. Benedict does not seem inhibited by this text.

5.

winter . . . summer (in hieme . . . in aestate). One wonders whether this verse has not been added to the text, since the previous one has just expressed the considered opinion that a monk in a temperate climate only needs one cowl. Still, even in a temperate climate such as central Italy, without central heating there is a great difference between winter and summer temperatures.

thick . . . worn or light cowl (vellosam . . . puram aut vetustam), literally, "woolly . . . worn or old." Even today the cucullas worn by monks in the unheated churches of Europe are far heavier than those worn by American monks. The latter wear light cucullas in winter and none at all in summer.

apron (scapulare). A word of very uncertain meaning, mainly because only Benedict and one other monastic text (*vit. patr. Jur.* 3.5) mention it. Blaise, s.v., interprets it as some kind of binding of the tunic for work, perhaps under the arms (*rebracchiatorium:* shoulders). I prefer to see it as a protective apron hanging from the shoulders, which may not be so different from Vogüé's suggestion that it was a modified form of the cuculla (6.916). In no case can it be compared to the modern monastic scapular, since that is not a garment for work at all, but rather something that gets in the way of most active work.

sandals and shoes (pedules et caligas). As with many of the items described in this chapter, we are not altogether sure what these words mean. *Pedules* can mean sandals or stockings, so some translators (e.g., Manning, Schmitz) translate it "socks and shoes." But if one takes *pedules* as sandals, then there may be a division here between summer and winter, or perhaps between indoor and outdoor wear. At any rate, the monks certainly wore some kind of heavy boots for field work; and only the hardiest person could go without stockings in the Italian winter. RM 81.25-30 is more detailed on this matter.

7.

worry about (causentur), literally, make a case. In RB 2.35, concerning the abbot and his arrangement of priorities, the word means to "make an excuse." In Benedict's mind, questions like the color and texture of the monk's clothing are not worth much concern.

In *reg.* 9, which is listed by *RB 1980* as a direct quote because of the words *vilius comparatur,* Basil teaches a similar thing: buy whatever food is easily available in your district. In *reg.* 11, the same idea is applied to clothing, and *reg.* 95 mentions the coarseness and cut of clothing.

What seems like a simple matter of common sense is still worth mentioning, namely, that monks should be content with the simple things that are available to their neighbors. Once one starts to require special clothing for monks, this principle is quickly forgotten.

color (colore). For centuries, Benedictines have been associated with black (Black Monks), but in ancient times that color was associated with luxury (Lentini, 485). In fact, Caesarius of Arles, a contemporary of Benedict, prohibited the nuns of his city to wear black for that reason (*reg. virg.* 44; 55). At any rate, many branches of the Benedictines today wear white or other colors.

8.

size . . . fits (mensura . . . mensurata). Benedict often speaks about the need for moderation and balance in the monastic life but here he

extends it to the very cut of the monk's clothing. Perhaps he worries that someone will extend the principle of coarse or cheap clothing to the point of shortening the garments. That is where Benedict draws the line. See *Index:* Measure.

9.

immediately (in praesenti) could also mean "for the meantime." The latter meaning is indicated by OLD, s.v. *praesens*, 16, and that is the translation of Vogüé, 2.621, but the meaning I and most other translators have chosen seems more logical. At least experience shows that monks tend to accumulate an excessive amount of clothing in their rooms. Hence many communities have a used clothes room, and some of the more ascetic ones prohibit their members from keeping more than the barest essentials of clothing.

for the poor (propter pauperes). This little phrase tends to shock some people because it suggests that (1) the monks were more affluent than the surrounding poor (2) and they wore the same clothing. This is not the only passage in RB where others are called "poor." It does not mean that the monks were rich, but it merely accepts the fact that an organized monastic life will ordinarily not be sustainable under grinding poverty. See *Index:* Poor. As for the second question, despite the somewhat tendentious note in *RB 1980,* 263, it is clear that if the ancient monks wore a distinctive garb, it was not nearly as different from ordinary dress as the present habit (for men) is from today's dress. See Vogüé, 7.372-389.

Note also that Benedict does not suggest that the clothes be worn till they are ragged. His ideal was different from the Desert Fathers, who are reported to have considered it scandalous to abandon one's cloak until it was in such a condition that if one left it by the side of the road for three days, no one would pick it up (*apoph., PG* 65.227; cited by Lentini, 486).

It is also clear that the individual monk was not in a position to give his clothing to the poor; this had to be done through an intermediary, probably the cellarer or later on the almoner. The prohibition of direct almsgiving is an aspect of monastic poverty that is too often unrecognized.

10.

a monk (monacho). If it is correct to interpret this as an indefinite, then it becomes a sort of aphorism like RB 40.6 (no wine) and 49.1 (Lent).

enough (sufficit) appears three times in RB 55 (4,10,15) and serves as a leitmotif for the discussion. Indeed, *sufficit* might be as good a motto for

Benedictines as *ora et labora*. This word provides a strong link to Basil, *reg*. 9, which also uses it three times (Holzherr, 264). See *Index:* Enough.

The provision of two garments for monks was a very old one. Since they slept in the same kind of clothing as they wore all day, such a provision was necessary for hygienic reasons, although it is probable that not many peasants of the time owned two cloaks. According to Jerome, *praef. in reg.* 4, Pachomius provided two ordinary tunics and a heavier one for bed, as well as two cucullas; Cassian, *conf*. 9.5, recommends two tunics; RM 81.1 provides a night tunic. All in all, the monks were not short of clothing as compared with ordinary people of that time.

for a change at night (propter noctes) indicates that monks wore both the tunic and cowl at night. In 22.5-6 they are told to sleep fully clothed so as to be able to respond to the call for the Night Office.

11.

Lentini, 487, notes how the short, clipped diction of this verse matches the thought: Benedict has no patience with superfluity. Even the term *amputari* has rather violent overtones, though it probably just means "take away" in this verse (2.26; 33.1). Pachomius, *pr.* 81, tells the superior: "Anything you find beyond this (the prescribed list of clothing) you shall take away without (fear of) contradiction."

12.

anything else that is worn out (quodcumque est vetere). It is not possible to turn this into graceful English without some kind of extraordinary means such as this noun clause. This verse is almost identical with v. 9 and forms an interior inclusion.

13.

pants (femoralia) were probably worn for horseback riding on a journey. The use of leggings was varied in medieval monasteries: at Cluny it was expected; at Monte Cassino it was optional; but Hildemar frowns on it (Lentini, 487). For his part, Basil, *reg.* 11, forbids different garb for inside and outside the monastery. The fact that the full habit cannot be worn outside the modern monastery is, to my mind, a good reason for its modification.

wash them (lota). This is not the only time Benedict asks for cleanliness. In v. 10 he mentions the laundry as a regular thing, and in 32.4 and 35.7-10 he talks about keeping things clean. Clearly, cleanliness is not incompatible with simplicity or poverty, and it also forms a powerful symbol of inner purity. Although cleanliness can become a fetish, its absence casts serious doubt on the spiritual health of a religious institution.

14.

Verses 13-14 are somewhat redundant, since the idea of receiving travel-clothing from the wardrobe and returning it is repeated twice. In fact Benedict repeats no less than four times (55.9,12,13 and 14) the rule of returning clothes to the wardrobe, so there must have been abuses against the regulation in his monastery. Otherwise, why risk this kind of didactic overkill? In addition, the middle unit, "The cowls and tunics . . . usually have," is in itself unexplained. But since it is flanked by the repeated "principle of restitution," it is sufficiently clear. Steidle, 157, (followed as usual by Salzburg, 201) solves this problem by making the final sentence a relative clause modifying "Cowls and tunics." Finally, the word "somewhat" is actually represented twice in the Latin by *aliquanto* and *modice*. On this point, Benedict parts company with Basil, who opposes different garb for special occasions (*reg.* 11; Vogüé, 2.621).

15.

bedding (Stramenta . . . lectorum). The root word is *sterno,* to spread, and especially to spread straw for bedding. But Benedict wants his monks to sleep on separate straw ticks and not simply in a pile of straw as was the custom in ancient hostels. Although the bedding described does not include items that we take for granted, such as sheets, it nevertheless represents a decent standard of living for the sixth century.

a woolen one (lena). The author remembers needing a blanket on the hottest nights at Monte Cassino since the walls are six feet thick and maintain an icebox effect even into midsummer.

16.

inspected (scrutinanda) is the iterative form of *scrutare* (RM 82.28) = to look. The idea of the superior inspecting the beds of the monks may strike the modern reader as ridiculous at best and outrageous at worst. To put the matter in context, it should be remembered that the monk in Benedict's monastery had no other private place than his bed. There were no private rooms or closets. Consequently, the straw tick was about the only place one could keep a bit of food or other private goods. But of course that is the point: private property is absolutely outlawed in the cenobium. It is hard to imagine a system more antithetical to our own ethos of individualism, but for monks of Benedict's day it was not at all impossible. For our part, we should admit that we have not solved the problem of how to save some monks from their own acquisitiveness.

Still, dispossession was never easy, as is shown from many texts in the ancient monastic tradition. Thus RM 82.24,28 has the deans watch their

charges carefully for any sign of private possessions. And two other Rules from the time of Benedict also show that cenobites were tempted to hide things in their beds: *vit. patr. Jur*. II.6; Caesarius, *reg. virg*. 30.

private possessions (opus peculiare). The term *peculiaris* seems to come from *pecus* (cattle); later it means the management of property held in trust (OLD, s.v.). Cassian uses *opus peculiare* to mean work done outside the monastery and for which cash is earned (*inst.* 4,14,16; 7.7); finally it came to mean something that a cenobite possessed without the permission of the abbot (Vogüé, 6.925-928). In the medieval period, the *peculium* was an allowance given to individual monks in England. Obviously, by that time things had departed very far from Benedict's regulations against private property. In our own time, monks use many, many things as if they were private property; the test comes when obedience requires them to give up those things.

In RB 33, which is on the same topic, the term for private ownership is *proprium* and not *peculiare*. Does this indicate that the two treatises were written at different times, or perhaps that they were influenced by different literary sources? The title of RB 33 mentions *proprium* and is clearly from Basil; the title of RM 82 contains *peculiare*. Gribomont claimed that RB 33 is primarily dependent on Basil, but I think it depends on Cassian (see RB 33 notes; RB 33 Overview, B).

a very severe punishment (gravissimae disciplinae). This is the only place in the Rule where the superlative degree of *gravis* is used in regard to punishment. Clearly, the Rule takes a dim view of private ownership. RM 82.26 levies excommunication for such a fault, and no doubt this verse implies the same penalty. See *Index:* Discipline, Gravity.

The abhorrence of the early monks for private possessions is shown in Jerome, *ep.* 22.23: When a Desert Father is found to have a hundred gold coins at death, the monks do not give them to the poor. Rather, they throw them in the grave with the corpse and cry: "May you and your money go to hell!"

18.

completely root out (radicitus amputetur). The reference to RB 33.1 is unmistakable, but now a very important corollary is provided, namely, that the best way to root out possessiveness is to provide people with what they need. This addition rounds out the picture, for it shows that for the cenobium, the responsibility does not rest solely with the monks but also with the superior. This balance is also achieved in RB 34, which is the twin leaf of the diptych with RB 33. Psychologically speaking, dire want is one of the teachers of greed, for those who have

not been taken care of will invariably take care of themselves. See *Index:* Amputate.

completely (radicitus). In the original context of Cassian, *inst.* 7.21, the image is one of pulling out weeds that will not die unless they are completely eradicated. Here, however, the thrust is different. Benedict is saying that if the abbot wishes to eliminate possessiveness among his monks, he must be sure their needs are met. Any other approach is essentially hypocritical.

necessary (necessaria). As is made clear in RB 34, it is a question of needs and not wants. See RB 34 Overview.

19.

This list of items that the abbot should provide may seem rather specific, but apparently Benedict thinks they are the personal necessities. It is doubtful whether anyone would venture to provide such a list for our own time, when there is such a tremendous variation in circumstances among monasteries and monastics. As RB 34 indicates, some monks will "need" far more than others, but they should be aware that their needs are really their weakness. In all ages, however, many more things were needed by the monks for their daily existence, but these things were not kept by individuals. Lentini, 492, however doubts whether Benedict's list is meant to be taxative, noting that it does not mention soap or razors!

20.

Yet (autem). The adversative in this verse indicates that the principle from the Acts is really a corrective to possible abuse of the previous verse. That is, besides providing the list just given, the abbot must also be aware of what each monk personally needs for his well-being. Benedict is realistic enough to know that no standardized, bureaucratic approach to these matters will ever be adequate (Lentini, 493).

used to receive (dabatur) is an attempt to preserve the precise meaning of the Latin imperfect tense, which denotes continued action and not a once-and-for-all event. This is done to prevent Acts 4:35 from being interpreted as a statement of ideology, which it is not. Rather, it describes a few incidents in the earliest Church that are illustrative of the mutual love that flowed from Jesus' resurrection. See note 34.1.

This same passage of the Acts is quoted in 34.1, but there the verb is *dividebatur,* which is the word used in the Vulgate Bible. That is the form used by Basil, *reg*. 94, which Benedict seems to be following in this verse. He may also be dependent on Augustine, *reg. serv.* 1.3. This is one of the few times that Benedict quotes Acts 2 and 4, which are the

biblical heart of Augustine's Rule, and which were (mistakenly) claimed by Cassian to be the scriptural basis of cenobitism (*conf.* 18).

21.

needy . . . envious (indigentium . . . invidentium) is a play on words which is not transferable into English. The point is the same as in RB 34.3-6: if the monks have what they need, they have no reason to fret about the apparent favoritism being lavished on others. Only the superior may know the true needs of the other. This is one of the central discussions in Augustine, *reg. serv.* 5,6 and 9.

22.

Judgment of God (Dei retributionem). The same sobering meditation is invoked in 3.11 and 65.22. Those chapters seem to have come out of the cauldron of controversy (see notes), so it is possible that RB 55 did as well. Or perhaps the warning to remember the divine Judgment is Benedict's way of hedging the considerable power he invests in the abbot in each one of these chapters: decision making (RB 3); distribution of goods (RB 55); subordination of the prior (RB 65).

RB 55 Overview

Benedict's chapter on clothing and shoes is not one of his better-known sections. This is partly due to the mundane nature of the content, but there is more to it than that. The chapter also includes comments on dispossession, plus details on the cut of the clothes, travel-wear and the bedding of the monks. Although the chapter is twenty-two verses in length, still the sheer number of topics insures that everything is only touched on lightly.

Furthermore, in comparison with his sources, Benedict does not seem to be at his best in RB 55. On the one hand, the chapter betrays an extremely severe outlook, but on the other hand it is too vague to be of much practical use. By and large, he leaves out the theological themes that might have enlightened this rather dour and dry chapter. Nevertheless, we will see that he does add some things of value to the tradition, so it is worthwhile to devote an Overview to this material. The only systematic study on this chapter is Vogüé, 6.909-935, though the less scientific insights of Lentini, 480-495, are also useful.

A. The Master and Benedict on Clothing and Footwear

The basic literary sources of RB 55 lie in the Master's chapters 81 and 82. RM 81, which lies behind RB 55.1-15, covers many of the same topics: the basic clothing of the monk, the common wardrobe, the prin-

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ciple of no extra clothing. But there are also aspects of this chapter that differ from Benedict. For example, the Master distinguishes between winter and summer clothes, whereas Benedict legislates for different climates. To judge from this point, Benedict may have envisioned foundations at a distance (but see note 55.2).

Another thing that separates the two chapters is vocabulary. Instead of Benedict's *cuculla,* the Master speaks of a *paratura.* Probably the Master's *pallium* is like Benedict's *scapulare,* but the latter is only used for work while the *pallium* seems to be regular clothing. Along this same line, the monks of the Master wear leggings *(brachae)* on a regular basis, but for RB 55.13 those underclothes are used only for journeys. The conclusion one must draw from this comparison is that the Master is far more liberal about clothing. His monks have more to wear and he does not seem worried about the cost.

It could be objected, of course, that we are not completely sure about the exact meaning of most of these articles of clothing. The same holds for the terms for footwear, namely, *pedules et caligas* (RB 55.6) and the corresponding terms in RM. But in this case, RM 81.25-30 explains clearly enough what each item was like. Overall, Benedict is much less precise in this chapter than the Master. That may be because he is legislating for varied conditions and does not want to be too precise (Vogüé, 6.918-919).

Benedict solves the problem of varied climates in a way that is typical of him: namely, he gives the abbot a great measure of discretion in deciding on the clothing of the monks (see note 55.3). This becomes especially significant when we notice that the abbot is not mentioned once in RM 81. It is also entirely characteristic of the Master to lay down rules in great detail and expect the abbot to follow them; Benedict usually prefers to give the abbot more latitude (see esp. RB 43 on reconciliation, and 39–40 on food and drink).

B. The Influence of Basil

But if the basic framework of RB 55 is derived from the Master, it could be argued that the essential spirit is drawn from quite a different source, namely, the Latin Rule of St. Basil. The principle RB text that shows this influence is 55.7, instructing the abbot not to pay much attention to the color or texture of the clothing, but rather to buy what is locally available for a decent price (Basil, *reg.* 11).

There is another element that Benedict probably draws from Basil, though it is one that cannot be called a quote. Three times in RB 55 the verb *sufficere* ("it is enough") is employed, making it a veritable leitmotif. This is not just a formal consideration, for the spirit of decent

frugality pervades the entire chapter on clothing and shoes. It is again notable that *sufficere* does not appear at all in RM 81, although the Master no doubt wants modest, simple clothing. On the other hand, Basil, *reg.* 11, also uses *sufficere* three times, and it seems plain enough that this is where Benedict got his theme (Vogüé, 6.919).

Vogüé, 7.272-289, expands on the influence of Basil in this matter of clothing, noting that *reg.* 11 is the finest treatise on the subject in all of ancient monastic literature. For Basil, the basic biblical text is 1 Timothy 6:8: "If we have food and clothing, we have all that we need." This teaches Christians to dress humbly and modestly—and notice that Basil is addressing all Christians, not just monks.

Basil tends to see Christianity as essentially a sectarian existence in the midst of unbelieving paganism. As such, he thinks the community must have a uniform of some sort that sets it off from the rest and which provides a unifying symbol for the group. Compared to this, later allegorical interpretations of the monastic habit, such as that of Evagrius, *prak.* prol. 2–7, fall somewhat flat, at least in Vogüé's view (7.281). That also goes for Cassian's idea that the monastic clothes are the property of the monastery, not the monk, and are thus a strong symbol of dispossession (*inst.* 4.5).

While one can appreciate Basil's view of the monastic habit as a countercultural sign, especially in a hostile environment, it is not at all sure that Benedict means to imply such a theology. Yet Benedict is in agreement with Basil that the habit should be clothing that is a little different from that of seculars (RB 55.9), and that it should be worn in all situations and not just for the liturgy (55.13-14). Ancient monks certainly did not wear anything as nonfunctional as the modern Benedictine habit for men. The habit needs modification, and it has been modified by experimental groups and small, reform monasteries. It is time the mainstream of Benedictine men think about modifying their garb.

C. Dispossession

After the discussion of the clothing, shoes and bedding of the community, Benedict switches to the topic of dispossession. The mention of bedding reminds him to warn the abbot to inspect the beds frequently to make sure that things are not being hidden in them. That may strike us as odd, but it should be remembered that the monks had no other private space apart from their beds, so if one was going to store something, this would be the place (see notes for 55.16-17).

Probably our first reaction to bed-inspection lies somewhere between bemusement and horror. Not only does it smack of the marine barracks or the boys' boarding school; it also bespeaks a lack of pri-

vacy that the modern person could hardly bear. As a matter of fact, monks in the fourth and fifth centuries usually had private cells, but by the time of Benedict these had given way to open dormitories. See RB 22 Overview, B.

The Rule of the Master says nothing about the abbot checking the beds, but it does make the deans keep an eye on their charges so they do not accumulate superfluous chattels (RM 82.24,28). But both Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 30, and *vit. patr. Jur.* II.6, speak of the problem of things being hidden in the bedding, so Benedict is at least in tune with his times.

In RB 55.18 the author goes on to speak of the vice of private ownership, which follows logically from his previous remark. In order to preclude this problem, Benedict instructs the abbot to make sure that the members of the community have everything that they need. And he then spells this out in the form of a list of ten items for everyday use in the sixth-century cenobitic monastery (55.19).

The list given here will ring a bell, for two of the items were mentioned in RB 33.3: *graphium* and *tabulas*. In fact, RB 33 presents virtually the same teaching against private possessions; yet there is a difference. Whereas RB 33 is essentially addressed to the monk, RB 55.18-19 and indeed the whole of RB 55 is aimed at the abbot. If it is the duty of the monks to live out the poverty they have vowed, then it is the duty of the abbot to make sure that they have the necessities of life.

The last two verses of RB 55 expand on this theme, quoting the famous text of Acts 4:35 concerning the care of those in the first Christian community: "Each person used to receive what was necessary." Here again, we have a discussion that we have heard before, namely in RB 34 where the same biblical text is quoted and the same conclusion is drawn from it: The abbot must carry out a distribution of goods that will meet the needs of each of the varied individuals in the community.

As in RB 34, the dominant influence in RB 55.20-22 is the Rule of Augustine. We saw in the earlier chapter (see RB 34 Overview, C) how Augustine was deeply concerned about how to assure peace in a community which contained both the peasant and the rich aristocrat. Benedict does not allude to that great social gulf, but he knows well that envy and jealousy can tear a community apart. Therefore, he counsels the abbot not to be swayed by the envy of the strong when he must give special attention and material help to the weak and the needy members.

Vogüé, 6.829, complains that this part of RB 55 shows Benedict at his worst. He has picked out two verses of RM 82 (24 and 28) on the confiscation of private goods, but ignored the bulk of that chapter, which contains a moving exhortation not to be intent on worldly goods but on heavenly. This leaves us with a few dry and harsh regulations stripped of their original pastoral justification. Perhaps this happened

because Benedict already discussed the same subject in RB 33–34. At any rate, we have to admit that on this topic, the Master shows a more generous spirit than Benedict.

Nevertheless, we can still be glad that RB 55 has been added to the discussion of dispossession, for it makes a strong case for the responsibility of authority to look to the basic needs of those in its charge. It makes no sense to ask monks to give up their right to property unless someone else undertakes to provide them with the necessities of life. The axiom holds today as it did in the time of Benedict: if people are not taken care of, they will take care of themselves. But this is also the death of cenobitism.

John Cassian, *conf.* 19.6, describes cenobitism as a "life free from care," meaning that the cenobite does not have to worry about food and clothing and shelter. This was in fact the situation of most religious until recent times, when it was felt that such practices contributed to infantilism in the members. Now many monasteries, especially of women, require their members to live on a small budget. RB 55, however, agrees with Cassian that it is the role of authority to take care of the material needs of the monks. Then they have no excuse for getting entangled in material things and are free to seek the reign of God.

Although this may seem like a paltry problem affecting only the microcosm of monasticism, in fact it has massive ramifications in modern economics. After the fall of Eastern European Communism, one of the key questions is simply this: how to motivate people to do an honest day's work while still taking care that their basic needs are met? How to provide incentives for initiative without thereby allowing the strong and the clever to leave the masses in the dust—as is happening in Western capitalism?

LVI: DE MENSA ABBATIS

[1]Mensa abbatis cum hospitibus et peregrinis sit semper. [2]Quotiens tamen minus sunt hospites, quos vult de fratribus vocare in ipsius sit potestate. [3]Seniore tamen uno aut duo semper cum fratribus dimittendum propter disciplinam.

RB 56: THE TABLE OF THE ABBOT

1. The table of the abbot should always be with the guests and pilgrims. 2. But as often as there are few guests, he shall have the power

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to invite whomever of the brothers he pleases. 3. One or two seniors, however, should always be left with the brothers for disciplinary purposes.

RB 56 Notes

This chapter transmits the slightly longer RM 84, but the latter arranges for distinguished monks to eat with the abbot and guests. Therefore the Master's title: "Who ought to eat with the abbot?" is answered somewhat differently than in RB 56, where only the guests and pilgrims normally eat with the abbot. Or rather he eats with them, for the abbot's table seems to be in a different place than the main refectory. In that way, the regular meals of the brothers will not be disturbed.

Manning, 144, points out that RB 56 seems to be but another footnote to RB 53, which itself seems to include a number of additions after v. 15.

1.
A special table for visitors is also provided for in *reg. iv patr.* 2.41. The same thing is reported in *vit. patr. Jur.* III.22.

abbot (abbatis). In RB 53.10, Benedict has already instructed the abbot to break the lesser fast days when eating with the guests. RB 56 picks up on that arrangement and explains that the abbot's table is to be separate from the community, no doubt so as to avoid disruption of the common life (RB 53.16). RM 84 has the abbot's table with the brothers, and Vogüé, 6.1285, citing H. Menard, thinks Benedict also has the same arrangement. Holzherr, 266, agrees with this, but Lentini, 499, disagrees, saying that the purpose of removing disturbances from the common meal would then be subverted. And why would there be any danger of the common discipline breaking down if the abbot were present in the same room? Vogüé does think that the abbot and guests ate at a different time on fast days—no doubt earlier (6.1285-1286).

Also regarding the abbot, Benedict gives him more discretion in choosing table companions than does the Master, who provides the usual detailed casuistry. In RB 55 (see note 55.3), the abbot is given a great deal of power to make decisions on clothing. See also note 56.2 below.

The notion of having the abbot function as the chief agent of hospitality is consonant with RB 53.1-15. And even though RB 53.16-24 seems to delegate this task to the guest-director, it never explicitly removes the duty of hospitality from the abbot. This is a sacred duty that

ultimately falls back on the abbot, and the guest who is received warmly by the abbot certainly is reassured that the whole community welcomes her or him.

guests and pilgrims (hospitibus et peregrinis) are the main concern of this chapter, whereas RM 84 seems more intent on determining where each monk will eat, that is, with his deanery or with the abbot (Vogüé, 6.1287). The reason why Benedict's chapter is separated from that on hospitality (RB 53), where it would naturally seem to belong, is that he has shifted the focus of RM 84. Otherwise, he is generally following the schema (but reworking the contents) of the Master in this section of the Rule.

2.

few guests (minus hospites). *Minus* here could mean "no," as it is understood by Steidle, Manning and *RB 1980,* but that would leave us with a strange situation. Why should the abbot not eat with the community in such circumstances? Lentini, 498, notes that 38.9 instructs the *prior* to instruct the brothers on the table reading. He thinks reasonably that *prior* probably means "superior" in that text, since it would be unusual for the prior to be regularly instructing the community. In RM 84, by contrast, some monks always eat with the abbot whether there are guests present or not. Furthermore, the guests are not even mentioned first in RM 84.1, but rather the *seniores*. In that Rule, however, *senior* does not refer to date of entry (RB 63), but only, it seems, to porters.

Lentini also remarks that it would be odd for the abbot to eat alone, but in fact until recently the abbot did eat at a table by himself in some monastic refectories in this country. Yet this was not so inhumane as it sounds since there was silence for the table reading which precluded table conversation.

RM 84.2 quaintly invites only the monks who know the Psalter by heart *(psalterati)* to the abbot's table.

he shall have the power (in ipsius sit potestate) is a strong way of stating the abbot's complete control over the guest list at his table. It is another example of Benedict's general practice of giving the abbot broad latitude in his interpretation of the Rule.

3.

One or two seniors (Seniore . . . uno aut duo). The text here is obscure, since *seniore* seems to be ablative. Perhaps it goes with the impersonal verb *dimittendum* (are to be left). At any rate, the meaning seems plain enough. In RM 84, the Master elaborates, as he often does, on the im-

portance of having two deans for each deanery. Surveillance was of prime importance for the ever-vigilant Master. In 48.17 (see notes), Benedict has one or two seniors serve as overseers of *lectio divina.*

always (semper) occurs here and also in v. 1. Vogüé, 6.1286, remarks that these are the only two places in the entire chapter where Benedict becomes precise and definite. Otherwise, compared to RM 84 he is rather vague.

LVII: DE ARTIFICIBUS MONASTERII

[1]Artifices si sunt in monasterio cum omni humilitate faciant ipsas artes, si permiserit abbas. [2]Quod si aliquis ex eis extollitur pro scientia artis suae, eo quod videatur aliquid conferre monasterio, [3]hic talis erigatur ab ipsa arte et denuo per eam non transeat, nisi forte humiliato ei iterum abbas iubeat.

[4]Si quid vero ex operibus artificum venumdandum est, videant ipsi per quorum manus transigenda sint ne aliquam fraudem praesumant. [5]Memorentur semper Ananiae et Saphirae, ne forte mortem quam illi in corpore pertulerunt, [6]hanc isti vel omnes qui aliquam fraudem de rebus monasterii fecerint in anima patiantur.

[7]In ipsis autem pretiis non surripiat avaritiae malum, [8]sed semper aliquantulum vilius detur quam ab aliis saecularibus dari potest, [9]*ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus.*

RB 57: THE SKILLED WORKERS OF THE MONASTERY

1. If there are skilled workers in the monastery, let them practice their crafts with all humility if the abbot permits it. 2. But if anyone of these workers is so proud of his expertise that he thinks he is a great gift to the monastery, 3. he should be removed from his work. Nor should he return to it unless he has humbled himself and the abbot permits it again.

4. If some work of the artisans is to be sold, those who are to transact the sale should be careful not to presume to engage in any deception. 5-6. Let them keep in mind Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). Otherwise they and all who perpetrate some deception in monastic goods may suffer in their souls the death that Ananias and Sapphira bore in their flesh.

7. The evil of avarice ought not to creep into these prices. 8. Rather, they should sell things a little more cheaply than seculars can. 9. And so God will be glorified in all things (1 Pet 4:11).

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RB 57 Notes

T

skilled workers (artifices) refers to anyone who has acquired uncommon skill in any form of work through training and practice (Lentini, 502). This could include the fine arts such as painting or sculpture, but would mostly pertain to masonry, carpentry and so on. In ancient times the distinction between these categories was not so great as now. Manning, 146, thinks this chapter may not be about monks at all, but about the collaborators and intermediaries who work for the monks. He comes to this conclusion because there is no threat of excommunication as is so often present in the chapters of RB. As interesting as this suggestion may be, it is hard to see how the author could introduce such a change of perspective without somehow alerting the reader. Nor do the strictures against pride in the artisans seem to apply to those other than monks. Yet, Manning may be right about vv. 4-9, which Lentini also thinks are aimed at lay agents of the monastery.

The title of RM 85, on which RB 57 is loosely based, is instructive: "How and for how much things made in the monastery should be sold." The Master concentrates mainly on the need to sell monastic products much more cheaply than seculars can and thus give witness against avarice. Benedict, however, adds material on the workers themselves (57.1-3), thus personalizing the discussion. Furthermore, he expands the Master's verses against fraud in these transactions (57.4-6) and reduces the treatment of avarice (57.7-9). For a full analysis of the chapter, see Vogüé, 6.937-949.

1.

practice (faciant). It may seem strange that Benedict would bother to say that the monks should work at their area of expertise, but in fact early monasticism was not particularly interested in skilled work. In Egypt, for example, the eremitic monks mostly plaited ropes (for Nile boats), a task that allowed them to be free for prayer, but which also involved little skill (see Chitty, 3,31). Among the cenobites, Pachomius and Basil certainly valued skilled workers, but they too prohibited certain work as unfit for monks (see Basil, *reg. fus.* 38). Benedict, on the other hand, does not set down precise regulations as to what work may be done by his monks, but he does insist that it be done humbly.

with all humility (cum omni humilitate) is not a cliché in a Rule that puts that virtue at the center of its spirituality (see RB 7). Skilled work, especially in the fine arts, is only arrived at through long discipline. Moreover, it requires uncommon concentration and intelligence, all of which engenders in the worker a spirit of independence and pride of

accomplishment. It is not easy to submit this kind of expertise to obedience. Indeed, if any particular group of people has had more trouble with holy obedience through the centuries of monastic history than the intellectuals, it is the artists. Sometimes the craftsmen of the monastery have achieved such power and status as to be virtually ungovernable by the abbot (see Enders, 275–316). See *Index:* Humility.

2.

proud of his expertise (pro scientia artis suae), literally, "for skill in his art." Again, this need not be limited to the fine arts, but could apply to trades and crafts. *Scientia* is not just theoretical knowledge, but practical skill in doing things.

he is a great gift (conferre), literally, "that he is bestowing a boon." The point is, of course, that if one is a member of a community, all one's talents and energies belong to the community by right. Therefore, one is only doing one's duty by contributing to the full. St. Augustine, *reg. serv.* 1.7, discusses this same issue in regard to monks who bring large dowries to the monastery: they are not to claim privileges because of this. Cassian, *inst.* 4.14, has the same teaching as Benedict on skilled artisans; Benedict probably gets the phrase *conferat monasterio* from this source.

3.

removed from his work (erigatur ab ipsa arte). *Erigere* normally means to "lift up," but here it must mean to remove. Vogüé, 8.2.41, says that the word meant to "cause to go out" only in the Roman dialect. In fact, A. Mundò, 1.123, thinks that this is one proof of the Roman provenance of RB.

Removal seems to be a rather radical solution to the problem, somewhat resembling the amputation of private property in RB 33.1 and 55.18. Benedict does not capitulate to the idea that some people become so fully identified with their work that to separate them from it is tantamount to annihilation. He prefers to risk this danger rather than permit the monk to cut himself off from the spiritual roots of his vocation in obedience. Nonetheless, it would be imprudent for monastic authority to conclude that a highly gifted and productive monk need be removed from his work except for the most serious reasons. Divine talents are not to be squandered nor reduced to submission by authority. See *Index:* Work.

humbles himself (humiliato). The word never means "humiliate" in RB. That is a degradation that does not enter into Benedict's thinking. The only spiritually useful form of humility is that which is fully accepted and internalized by the subject, and not imposed by authority on a resisting object. See *Index:* Humility.

4.

those who are to transact the sale (ipsi per quorum manus transigenda sint), literally, "those by whose hands they are to be transacted." Generally, the artisans or artists would not handle the business end of their work. No doubt the cellarer would be the ordinary person to carry out these transactions. It is noteworthy, however, that nowhere in RB 31 is the cellarer warned against "fraud." Perhaps Manning is right to think that 57.4-7 applies to intermediaries who do business for the monastery. Basil, *reg. fus.* 29, discusses the monastic sale of goods.

be careful . . . not to presume (videant . . . ne . . . praesumant). The pleonasm is not as apparent in Latin as in English. Benedict often uses the term *praesumere* with a special sense of indignation, as if the very idea of something is unthinkable in a monk. See *Index:* Presumption.

deception (fraudem). If this verse is based on RM 85.8-11, as Vogüé, 2.626, indicates, then the deception here does not lie in defrauding the customer but in keeping back part of the sale price for oneself and not giving it to the community.

5.

Ananias and Sapphira (Ananias et Sapphira) are a good biblical example of the deception Benedict condemns, for their sin was to claim they were giving everything to the apostles, while they were in fact keeping something back. They, of course, were under no obligation of justice to give anything to the Church, whereas the agent owes the monastery its fair share of the proceeds.

Otherwise they (ne forte). In the Latin, this is a negative purpose clause, but in order to simplify the English grammar it is converted here into a conditional clause. In fact, this is one of the most convoluted sentences in the whole of RB and most translations end up being paraphrases.

souls . . . flesh (anima . . . corpore). Benedict seems to think that Ananias and Sapphira actually committed the lesser sin and were merely punished by physical death! That was also the interpretation of Origen, Augustine and especially Cassian (*conf.* 6.11), who claim that their fraud was only a minor sin and so they were not punished by eternal death. Perhaps this curious piece of exegesis is a valiant attempt to put a good face on the violent episode in Acts 5:1-11 and its disturbing implications for Christian theology. The reason why it is even worse to defraud the monastery is that all of its goods are consecrated to God; at least that is the interpretation of Lentini, 505.

7.

The evil of avarice (avaritiae malum). In RB 33, which seems to be

largely based on Cassian's *inst.* 7 on avarice, Benedict calls private possession by a monk a *vitium*. The same holds true for 55.18.

creep (subripiat) seems to be confused with *subrepat*. *Subripio,* which also appears in 39.7, means to snatch by surprise *(sub + rapio),* but the meaning here can hardly be that. After all, the avaricious bargainer plots carefully and "snatches" the opponent if he can. Rather, the word that Benedict wants is probably *subrepo* = to crawl along the ground.

8.

a little more cheaply than seculars can (vilius . . . quam ab aliis saecularibus dari potest). Probably Benedict's motive here is to insure that the monastery will never give the impression of driving a hard bargain for its goods (see RM 85.3-6). To make sure, they are to sell a bit more cheaply than the competition. What the author does not seem to realize, however, is that this undercuts the competition. Today we should be aware that we have advantages (such as the vow of poverty) that enable us to produce things more cheaply than "seculars." The demands of justice may require just the opposite from what Benedict wants, namely, that we refrain from undercutting.

seculars (saecularibus). This is the only place in RB where this adjective appears, although the corresponding noun *(saeculum)* is used a few times. All of these usages have at least a trace of the pejorative about them, but they are but a faint trace of the massive theme of the "world" in the Rule of the Master. For the Master, the world is simply the domain of the devil, so he has nothing good to say about it. See Kardong, 30.184-204; see *Index:* World.

9.

And so God will be glorified in all things (ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus). This motto, which is from 1 Peter 4:11, is often used in a universal sense, but the meaning here is more specific: even in these mundane, economic questions, we must be aware of the supernatural dimension. The monastery must have a sound economic basis in order to survive, but unlike a business corporation, the purpose of a monastery is not to make money or even to survive economically. The business of a monastery is to glorify God.

As beautiful as this closing sentence is—it has become the Benedictine motto U.I.O.G.D.—it is by no means adequate to answer all questions about monastic economics. Simplistic attitudes and solutions will not suffice in a sphere as complex and sometimes murky as modern economics. Those outside the situation should not be quick to criticize the means employed to finance a given monastery. Nevertheless, those

inside the situation should recall that it is very easy to fool themselves in these matters; throughout the centuries many monasteries drifted into economic practices that eventually ruined them. For abundant proof of this, see David Knowles' massive writings on the history of English monasticism.

LVIII: DE DISCIPLINA SUSCIPIENDORUM FRATRUM

[1]Noviter veniens quis ad conversationem, non ei facilis tribuatur ingressus, [2]sed sicut ait apostolus: *Probate spiritus si ex Deo sunt.* [3]Ergo si veniens perseveraverit pulsans et illatas sibi iniurias et difficultatem ingressus post quattuor aut quinque dies visus fuerit patienter portare et persistere petitioni suae, [4]adnuatur ei ingressus et sit in cella hospitum paucis diebus.

[5]Postea autem sit in cella noviciorum ubi meditent et manducent et dormiant. [6]Et senior eis talis deputetur qui aptus sit ad lucrandas animas, qui super eos omnino curiose intendat.

[7]Et sollicitudo sit si revera Deum quaerit, si sollicitus est ad opus Dei, ad oboedientiam, ad opprobria. [8]Praedicentur ei omnia dura et aspera per quae itur ad Deum. [9]Si promiserit de stabilitate sua perseverantia, post duorum mensuum circulum legatur ei haec regula per ordinem [10]et dicatur ei: Ecce lex sub qua militare vis; si potes observare, ingredere; si vero non potes, liber discede. [11]Si adhuc steterit, tunc ducatur in supradictam cellam noviciorum et iterum probetur in omni patientia. [12]Et post sex mensuum circuitum legatur ei regula, ut sciat ad quod ingreditur. [13]Et si adhuc stat, post quattuor menses iterum relegatur ei eadem regula. [14]Et si habita secum deliberatione promiserit se omnia custodire et cuncta sibi imperata servare, tunc suscipiatur in congregatione, [15]sciens et lege regulae constitutum quod ei ex illa die non liceat egredi de monasterio, [16]nec collum excutere de sub iugo regulae quem sub tam morosam deliberationem licuit aut excusare aut suscipere.

[17]Suscipiendus autem in oratorio coram omnibus promittat de stabilitate sua et conversatione morum suorum et oboedientia, [18]coram Deo et sanctis eius, ut si aliquando aliter fecerit, ab eo se damnandum sciat quem irridit. [19]De qua promissione sua faciat petitionem ad nomen sanctorum quorum reliquiae ibi sunt et abbatis praesentis. [20]Quam petitionem manu sua scribat, aut certe, si non scit litteras, alter ab eo rogatus scribat et ille novicius signum faciat et manu sua eam super altare ponat. [21]Quam dum imposuerit, incipiat ipse novicius mox hunc versum: *Suscipe me,* Domine, *secundum eloquium tuum et vivam, et ne confundas me ab exspectatione mea.* [22]Quem versum omnis congregatio tertio respondeat, adiungentes Gloria Patri. [23]Tunc ille

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LVIII: DE DISCIPLINA SUSCIPIENDORUM FRATRUM

[1]Noviter veniens quis ad conversationem, non ei facilis tribuatur ingressus, [2]sed sicut ait apostolus: *Probate spiritus si ex Deo sunt.* [3]Ergo si veniens perseveraverit pulsans et illatas sibi iniurias et difficultatem ingressus post quattuor aut quinque dies visus fuerit patienter portare et persistere petitioni suae, [4]adnuatur ei ingressus et sit in cella hospitum paucis diebus.

[5]Postea autem sit in cella noviciorum ubi meditent et manducent et dormiant. [6]Et senior eis talis deputetur qui aptus sit ad lucrandas animas, qui super eos omnino curiose intendat.

[7]Et sollicitudo sit si revera Deum quaerit, si sollicitus est ad opus Dei, ad oboedientiam, ad opprobria. [8]Praedicentur ei omnia dura et aspera per quae itur ad Deum. [9]Si promiserit de stabilitate sua perseverantia, post duorum mensuum circulum legatur ei haec regula per ordinem [10]et dicatur ei: Ecce lex sub qua militare vis; si potes observare, ingredere; si vero non potes, liber discede. [11]Si adhuc steterit, tunc ducatur in supradictam cellam noviciorum et iterum probetur in omni patientia. [12]Et post sex mensuum circuitum legatur ei regula, ut sciat ad quod ingreditur. [13]Et si adhuc stat, post quattuor menses iterum relegatur ei eadem regula. [14]Et si habita secum deliberatione promiserit se omnia custodire et cuncta sibi imperata servare, tunc suscipiatur in congregatione, [15]sciens et lege regulae constitutum quod ei ex illa die non liceat egredi de monasterio, [16]nec collum excutere de sub iugo regulae quem sub tam morosam deliberationem licuit aut excusare aut suscipere.

[17]Suscipiendus autem in oratorio coram omnibus promittat de stabilitate sua et conversatione morum suorum et oboedientia, [18]coram Deo et sanctis eius, ut si aliquando aliter fecerit, ab eo se damnandum sciat quem irridit. [19]De qua promissione sua faciat petitionem ad nomen sanctorum quorum reliquiae ibi sunt et abbatis praesentis. [20]Quam petitionem manu sua scribat, aut certe, si non scit litteras, alter ab eo rogatus scribat et ille novicius signum faciat et manu sua eam super altare ponat. [21]Quam dum imposuerit, incipiat ipse novicius mox hunc versum: *Suscipe me,* Domine, *secundum eloquium tuum et vivam, et ne confundas me ab exspectatione mea.* [22]Quem versum omnis congregatio tertio respondeat, adiungentes Gloria Patri. [23]Tunc ille

frater novicius prosternatur singulorum pedibus ut orent pro eo, et iam ex illa die in congregatione reputetur.

[24]Res, si quas habet, aut eroget prius pauperibus aut facta sollemniter donatione conferat monasterio, nihil sibi reservans ex omnibus, [25]quippe qui ex illo die nec proprii corporis potestatem se habiturum scit.

[26]Mox ergo in oratorio exuatur rebus propriis quibus vestitus est et induatur rebus monasterii. [27]Illa autem vestimenta quibus exutus est reponantur in vestiario conservanda, [28]ut si aliquando suadenti diabolo consenserit ut egrediatur de monasterio—quod absit—tunc exutus rebus monasterii proiciatur. [29]Illam tamen petitionem eius, quam desuper altare abbas tulit, non recipiat, sed in monasterio reservetur.

RB 58: THE PROCEDURE FOR ACCEPTING BROTHERS

1. When someone comes first to the monastic life, he should not be allowed entry too readily, 2. but as the Apostle says: "Test whether the spirits be godly" (1 John 4:1). 3. Thus if the newcomer continues knocking and is seen to bear patiently for four or five days the rebuffs offered him and the difficulty of entrance, and if he persists in his request, 4. then let him come in and stay in the guest room for a few days.

5. After that, however, he should live in the novice quarters, where they learn the Scriptures, eat and sleep. 6. A senior should be assigned to them who is gifted in spiritual guidance and will observe them very carefully.

7. One must note whether he really seeks God, and whether he is serious about the Work of God, obedience and hardships. 8. He should be told all the hard and harsh things that lead to God. 9. If he promises to persevere in his stability, after a period of two months let this Rule be read to him straight through. 10. Then tell him: "Here is the law you wish to serve under. If you can keep it, come in. If not, you are free to leave." 11. If he is still determined, he should be taken back to the novice quarters and again tested in all patience. 12. And after a period of six months let the Rule be read to him, so he knows what he is getting into. 13. If he still holds his ground, the Rule should be read to him again after four months. 14. And if after considering the matter carefully he promises to keep everything and carry out all he is told to do, then he should be received into the congregation. 15. He must realize that from that day forward the law of the Rule prevents him from leaving the monastery. 16. Neither may he remove his neck from the yoke of the Rule, which he was free to avoid or undertake after such a protracted discernment.

17. The one to be received, however, must first promise his stability, fidelity to the monastic lifestyle and obedience before all in the oratory. 18. This is done in the presence of God and his saints, so he should realize that if he ever acts otherwise, he will be condemned by the One whom he mocks. 19. He should make his promise in a written petition in the name of the saints whose relics are there and the name of the current abbot. 20. He is to write the petition in his own hand, or certainly, if he is illiterate, he may ask someone else to write it. Then the novice makes his mark on it and personally lays it on the altar. 21. When he has deposited it, the novice himself immediately begins this verse: "Receive me, Lord, according to your promise and I will live. Do not disappoint me in my hope" (Ps 118:116). 22. The whole community should answer this verse three times, with the addition of the Gloria Patri. 23. Then the brother novice should lie prostrate at the feet of each one so they might pray for him. And from that time onward he is to be considered a member of the community.

24. If he has possessions, he should give them to the poor beforehand, or he should give them to the monastery by a gift made in solemn form. He must keep nothing at all back for himself, 25. since he knows that from henceforward he does not even have any more power over his own body.

26. So then and there in the oratory he should be stripped of the clothes he is wearing and clothed in the garb of the monastery. 27. The clothing taken off him, however, should be placed in the wardrobe for safekeeping. 28. If he should ever consent to the devil's suggestion that he leave the monastic life—and may it never happen!—then he should be stripped of the garb of the monastery before being turned out. 29. He shall not, however, receive back his written petition which the abbot once took from the altar. It shall be kept in the monastery.

RB 58 Notes

T

procedure (disciplina). The Latin term has a broad range of possible meanings. Sometimes it means punishment, as in 32.5; 54.5; 34.7 and 55.17; other times it refers to an orderly monastic life, as in 2.14; 63.9; 63.19; but here it simply means a way of doing things, as it does in 19T: *de psallendi disciplina*. Indeed, the index of titles has *ordine* instead of *disciplina*. See *Index:* Discipline.

receiving (suscipiendorum) is an important word in the vocabulary of Benedict, occurring five times in this chapter alone (T,14,16,17,21), and often throughout the Rule. The title may suggest that the "reception" involved here is essentially a human affair, with a group of people ac-

cepting a new member. But theologically, our acceptance by God is the basis for everything else in the monastic life. See *Index:* Accept.

Böckmann, 7.141-145, analyzes the outstanding literary features of this important chapter. The structure is as follows: 1-16, testing and preparation; 17-26, profession ceremony; 27-29, storing clothes and charter. The first part ends with the candidate accepting the Rule; the second shows the community accepting the candidate. Part one is loaded with "if" clauses since it is a time of trial. Benedict loves "threes" and here he indulges himself freely. There are lots of time designations, all moving toward the great step of profession. And he gathers all the elements into a single compact ceremony. He traces a clear path: gate, guesthouse, novitiate, chapel, altar. There are three doors: the gate, the novitiate, profession. The radical terms "all," "whole" and "entire" are common, for this is an all-or-nothing business. The candidate has a lot of important things to do, but the most important things are done *to* her or him: acceptance, reception, incorporation.

1.

at first (noviter). This chapter deals only with those who are seeking entrance into monastic life for the first time. The following chapters treat of other cases: children (RB 59); priests (RB 60), and monks of other houses (RB 61). Basil, *reg. fus.* 11–12; *reg. parv*. 94–107, discusses an even wider range of possible candidates such as slaves, married people and those with unresolved obligations. No doubt Benedict also had to arrange for a wide variety of postulants, but he does not say so. These questions were also the subject of papal and imperial legislation in that era. Lentini, 509, adds that *noviter* suggests that the postulant is still in the fresh fervor of an idealistic quest for holiness. The term *veniens* emphasizes the human initiative involved, but in fact it was always understood that God is the primary impetus for the monastic vocation.

monastic life (conversationem). The term contains the root *converti* (to change or convert) but in the iterative form it simply means the monastic style of life. Some mss have *conversionem* but that is probably a change made by scribes who did not understand the rather unusual word *conversatio*. The related term *conversus* could mean a private religious (RM 87.1), a person who came to the monastic life as an adult or later a "laybrother," that is, one who was usually illiterate and not called to priestly ordination. On the other hand, RM 90, on which this chapter is largely based, begins with "those who wish to turn to *(converti)* God," meaning lay candidates and not *conversi* (private monks). See *Index:* Conversatio.

One monastic text that highlights the problem of allowing too easy entry is *The Lives of the Fathers of Jura,* which was written in Gaul shortly before the time of Benedict. In *vit. patr. Jur.* 13, Romanus accepts all who apply, and many do because of a famine. Later, his stricter blood brother Lupicinus weeds out those with no vocation by a rigorous program of fasting (36–40; cited in Holzherr, 388).

Even though Benedict is against hasty admittance of newcomers, this does not mean that he is not radically open to anyone who comes for the right reasons. Basil, *reg.* 6 and Augustine, *op. mon.* 22.25, warn against screening out anyone for social or other prejudicial reasons.

2.
the spirits (spiritus). In the First Letter of John, the reference is to prophets, namely, itinerant preachers of the gospel. In those earliest years of Christianity, which featured a good deal of doctrinal variety, there was considerable worry about orthodoxy. Although the same question might apply to monastic applicants in Benedict's day (and in our own), probably the reference here is less specifically doctrinal. See note on 53.5.

3.
The wording here is very close to *reg. iv patr.* 2.27: *Si ergo perseveraverit pulsans petenti non negetur ingressus.* That Rule wants the knocker to stand in front of the gate for a week, whereas Cassian, *inst.* 4.3,1 arranges for a ten-day wait. One wonders whether this is meant literally, or is merely symbolic? The words *si . . . perseveraverit pulsans* seem to be based on Luke 11:8, the story of the friend who refuses to quit knocking on the door at midnight. Luke's moral is that persistent prayer will gain its object. Lentini, 510, suspects that the applicant actually stayed with the porter, who usually had a separate hut outside the gate of the monastery. Böckmann, 7.150, points out the alliteration in v. 3: *perseveraverit, pulsans, patienter portare, persistere petitioni.*

patiently . . . rebuffs (injurias . . . patienter). The same pair is found in both 4.30 and 7.35, where it is a case of true wrongs, whereas in this text the trial is an artificial one, meant to test the mettle of the postulant. Hence the rendition "rebuffs." Böckmann, 150, interprets *injurias* as "coldness," which is in contrast to the warmth shown ordinary guests. One famous case of persistence in the face of coldness was Pachomius, who continued petitioning the hermit Palamon for acceptance (*vit. Pach.* 6). Benedict's basic point is good: the monastic community should not be anxious to lure newcomers to itself. In fact, the entire spirit of salesmanship and public relations has very little application to the question of religious vocation. Yet mistreatment of prospective monks

is never warranted, due to the demands of Christian charity. Today, the long years of testing in formation serve the same purpose. For a discussion of the antecedent monastic tradition on detaining newcomers, see the essay of C. Peifer in *RB 1980,* 437–443.

patiently (patienter). The candidate is expected to demonstrate initial patience, but patience is also one of the basic virtues to be learned in the novitiate. See *Index:* Patience.

4.

guest room (cella hospitum). The Master has the candidate stay in the guest quarters two months (88.7-10), and Cassian has the whole year of novitiate spent in that place (*inst.* 4.7) assisting the porter and caring for the guests. Although the matter seems garbled, Benedict probably wants the postulant to stay in the guest department for two months, at the end of which time the Rule is read to him (Vogüé, 6.1320). Cassian wants the postulant to serve the guests, which seems quite different from the traditional novitiate emphasizing hiddenness and contemplation. In modern monasticism, candidates normally come for visits before finally entering the community.

let him come in (annuatur ei ingressus). Böckman, 12.135, notes that the dynamism of RB 58 is entirely inclusive. Benedict does not dwell on the past life of the candidate in the outside world, but ushers him in through one door after another: the gate, the guesthouse, the novitiate and finally into the heart of the monastery, namely, the oratory.

5.

novice quarters (cella novitiorum). Benedict is the first monastic legislator to arrange for special novitiate quarters where the newcomers would live for a year. To judge from The Plan of St. Gall (Horn and Born, 1.311-321), this could take a rather elaborate form in the largest monasteries. In that hypothetical plan, the novices had their own chapel, plus a refectory and an infirmary. In recent monastic history, most monasteries kept the novices separate, but not to that point. Since the renewal of religious life after Vatican II, American monasteries no longer segregate the novices to any great extent. This is partly due to low numbers, but also from a desire that the novice get to know the community and vice versa. See *Index:* Cell.

learn the Scriptures (meditent). The ancient monastic method of "meditation" involved mulling the memorized biblical passages rather than purely mental cogitation. Most translators content themselves with the generalized term "study" in this verse, but most ancient monastic "study" involved the Bible. See *Index:* Meditation.

The term "novice" *(novicius)* is used by Benedict in a fully technical sense which it had not previously attained. Both Cassian and the Master use it at times, but merely as one of many terms for newcomers. See Vogüé, 6.1388.

Because vv. 5-6 use the plural (novices), Böckmann, 7.158, thinks they are an insert into the original text, which employs the singular. Of course, the insert could be by Benedict himself.

6.

senior (senior) has many meanings in RB, the most basic being one who comes to the monastery before another (63.8). Elsewhere, it refers to those with special spiritual gifts (46.6) as it does here. It seems that Benedict is the first to make the role of novice director a separate and permanent one. Cassian (*inst.* 4.7) assigns the task to the porter, while the Master leaves the newcomer under the surveillance of the watchdog guest-directors (RM 88.7-10). See *Index:* Senior.

gifted in spiritual guidance (aptus . . . ad lucrandas animas). *Lucror* can mean either to "gain" or to "cause to profit." The second meaning would seem to apply here. The conventional translation "win souls" sounds as if the novice is resistant and must be won over like a hardened sinner. The phrase does mean that in Matthew 18:15, where it applies to fraternal correction. In fact, most novices come with much good will and openness, but still in need of someone who can help them find their true selves and the best way forward for them. At any rate, the term *lucrari animas* would seem to imply the deep personal insight necessary in all real spiritual direction. Böckmann, 7.157, thinks the biblical basis of *lucrandas animas* may be 1 Corinthians 9:19-22: all to all.

observe them very carefully (omnino curiose intendat). Since Benedict often speaks of the need to care for persons, one is tempted to emphasize the *cura* element in *curiose*. Still, it does seem that the point here is observation of the novice so as to know his or her true nature. Of course, the ultimate purpose is to see what is best for the individual and the community. For *intendere,* see Casey, 4.103-120. See *Index:* Care.

7.

One must note (Et sollicitudo sit) seems to repeat the thought of the previous verse, and the same word is repeated later in the verse with a slightly different meaning: "he is serious." Since the verbal construction is impersonal *(sollicitudo sit), RB 1980* suggests that the whole community ought to observe the novice. That seems unlikely, given the seclusion of the novitiate. See *Index:* Care.

really seeks God (revera Deum quaerit). There are, after all, many other reasons for joining a monastic community, all of them bad. It is not even enough to be a godly person and to follow what one perceives to be the will of God if other important prerequisites are not present. If the primary motivation is not religious, then the whole enterprise is built on sand. According to Basil, *reg.* 14, this means "the search, that is, the insight by which we can see and contemplate the greatness of God's majesty deep within, in holy and continual thoughts on the goodness of God experienced by us" (quoted by Holzherr, 276). In her excursus on "seeking God," Böckmann, 7.159-161, stresses that God seeks us first, and did so personally in Jesus Christ. In RB, the Lord seeks his workman in Prol 14 and the abbot actualizes the divine quest by seeking the lost sheep (27.8). We could not seek the Lord if he had not first sought us.

Basil, *reg.* 6, advises that novices should not be admitted without testing, nor sent away carelessly. He quotes Matthew 11:28: "Come to me all you who are troubled and groaning under burdens. I will give you rest." See Holzherr, 275.

Work of God (opus Dei) means the whole monastic life in general in Basil, *reg.* 7, but Benedict never uses it that way. Nevertheless, "zeal for the work of God" is the main criterion for Basil, and Benedict probably takes it from him. Curiously, Benedict only uses *opus Dei* once in the liturgical section (16T), but often elsewhere to mean the Divine Office. Taken in its more general sense, the "work of God," that is, the work that God does, is to save us. And our work, or the work of the monk (see *operarius,* Prol 14), is to accept and participate in the divine saving activity in our life. See *Index:* Work.

The other two members of the set, namely, obedience and insults, are less specific. See Vogüé, 6.1321. Just as *meditatio* comes first in the trio given in 58.5, so here *opus Dei* comes first in a threesome.

hardships (opprobria). There is a graduated series here from the heights to the depths: Divine Office; obedience; hardships. It is by no means easy to find the precise English translation. Cassian makes no bones about advocating artificial insults to the novice (*inst.* 4.3) but Benedict has better sense than that. In *reg.* 6, Basil speaks about the need to learn to accept tasks considered humiliating by seculars. For example, all physical work was looked down on by the ancient nobility (Böckmann, 7.164). One thing is sure: the novice must learn to look at things differently, and especially to put aside ego and self-interest. Probably the fourth step of humility (RB 7.35-42) is the best commentary on this verse, but it speaks about a very high level of spiritual maturity,

so one should not expect a novice to attain to a level that most monks will be glad to have reached on their death bed.

8.

hard and harsh things (dura et aspera). In Prol 46, Benedict says that he has no intention of deliberately creating a hard *(asperum)* life for his monks, but in 58.8 he admits that the life will still bring its particular hardships. The statement is not that all hardships lead to God, for some may not. Rather, the director should discuss realistically with the novice the things about the monastic life that are inherently difficult. But this is no cause for despair, for these same things are precisely what "lead to God." That is, they are not just something to be tolerated but exploited as roads to salvation. In 71.2, obedience is also called a "way to God." Cassian, *conf.* 24.25 observes that "The royal way is sweet and easy, even though it seems hard and harsh."

9.

If he promises (Si promiserit). Although 58.5 seems to indicate that the novitiate has already begun, it may begin only here. That is the case with the first reading of the Rule in Pseudo-Macarius, *reg.* 23, and Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 58. RM 87.3,88.3 and 89.1-2 all speak of an initial reading of the Rule before the start of the novitiate. Since Benedict is combining several chapters of RM (87–90), there will be certain confusions because of overlap.

persevere in his stability (de stabilitate sua perseverantia) is grammatically inexplicable, but sustained by the best manuscripts. Lentini, 516, thinks that "persevere" refers to the monastic life as such, while "stability" has to do with the specific monastery. He bases this educated guess on the vow formula in RM 89.7-8: "I will to serve by the discipline of the Rule (persevere) in your monastery (stability)." This explanation seems less than cogent, since the words do not appear in the text of RB. Another suggestion, namely, that the word *sua* (his) was misread by scribes to replace *sive* (or) is more plausible: "stability and perseverance." No doubt monastic stability was ultimately based on the NT virtue of *hypomone,* patient endurance (Luke 21:19). This was seen as the primary virtue of the martyr. See *Index:* Stability.

after a period of two months (post duorum mensuum circulum), literally, "after a circle of two months." Perhaps the expression has to do with two circlings of the moon. Another possible interpretation is "about two months," although OLD, s.v., does not give any examples of that usage.

straight through (per ordinem). The same expression is found in 48.15, but there *ex integro* is added. The same meaning seems to hold

here, though, since it cannot be a question of reading the document from beginning to end in one sitting. What is important is for the novice to hear all the particulars of the Rule. Lentini, 517.

Here is the law you want to serve under (lex sub qua militare vis). The word *militare* lost its martial connotations in Late Latin, and meant only "to serve" (see note for Prol 3). The same term is found in RB 1.2, and there too one "serves under" a Rule and an abbot. The implied direct object is Christ. The "law" in this verse is obviously the Holy Rule, although the same word *(lex divina)* means Scripture in 53.9 and 64.9. See *Index:* Battle.

The use of direct address and the somewhat blunt expression of this verse puts heavy emphasis on the voluntary nature of the monastic commitment. Holzherr, 277, suggests that the repeated reading of the Rule parallels the gradual "handing over" of Christian faith statements (e.g., the Our Father) to the catechumens preparatory to baptism.

11.

taken back (tunc ducatur), literally, "taken to the aforesaid novitiate." The elaborate circumlocution may be calculated to stress the fact that, unlike some of the other Rules, Benedict's novitiate does not end after two months (Lentini, 517). Another possibility is that the novitiate only begins at this point and "taken back" is an over-translation. See Overview, C.2.

tested (probetur). In RM 90, the word "test" comes up several times and it is made clear that the abbot must "thwart" the novice (90.29). The Master insists that the novice be made to do the will of another and not his own (90.38) in what seems to be a deliberate program of repression. Whatever Benedict's "test" is, it probably is nothing quite so brutal. That is not to say, however, that self-centered egotism is to be overlooked in a novice. There is hardly anything that constitutes a bigger barrier to spiritual growth.

in all patience (in omni patientia). *Patientia* occurs in 58.3 as well, where it also has to do with testing. It would probably be off the mark to see these "tests" as something ingeniously concocted by the novice director to weed out the weaklings. It seems better to read "patience" as progress in carrying the Cross of Christ in a manner implied by 58.9. Every human life has its fair share of suffering, which can either embitter the person or result in greater union with Christ. From a psychological standpoint, the questions are: How well does this novice understand his own special flaws? How open is she to correction? How much potential is there for personal reformation? Lentini, 517,

even proposes that the meaning of patience in this verse is simply "suffering." See *Index:* Patience.

12.

a period of (circuitum) replaces *circulum* of v. 9.

what he is getting into (ad quod ingreditur). This is a rough expression, but it is the exact equivalent of the Latin. The problem, though, is that the novitiate is not just starting, but has been in progress for eight months. Perhaps the "entry" referred to here is final admission into the community. See, however, Overview, C.2, for a discussion of the confusion of the timetable in this part of the chapter.

13.

holds his ground (stat) may be overly colorful, but "stands" is not adequate either. The root *stare* is connected to "stability," which will be one of the promises made by the novice in 58.17. At this point, the novice is proving that he will not be easily dislodged from his resolve. On stability, see RB 1 Overview and notes for 43.4; 58.9,17.

14.

after considering the matter carefully (habita secum deliberatione) is juridical language resembling closely the papal letter of Gelasius, *ep.* 9.21. Vogüé, 6.1352, stresses the *mutual* scrutiny of the community and the novice as an important innovation of the Master. See *Index:* Consideration.

keep everything and carry out all he is told to do (omnia custodire . . . cuncta servare). The two phrases are virtually identical, but the dual usage may be based on the very important promise of RM 90.67 (see note 58.9).

15.

the law of the Rule also prevents him (lege regulae constitutum quod . . . non liceat). The construction in Latin is more elaborate: "it is set down by the law of the Rule that he may not. . . ." Lentini, 519, claims that "also" here is not superfluous, since it shows that the law of the Rule is added to the direct obligation to God. I fail to see the point. See *Index:* Rule.

leaving the monastery (egredi de monasterio) does not refer to mere physical exiting but definitive abandonment of the monastic life.

from that day forward (ex illa die) is repeated three times in this chapter, giving it an air of great solemnity. Clearly, the novice stands at an important juncture in his or her life, deciding whether to take the monastic road back to God (Prol 1–3) (Böckmann, 175).

16.

yoke (jugo) was a familiar enough reality of life in ancient times when draft animals were used for all heavy labor. Unfortunately, in conditions of slavery humans were also harnassed to yokes. In Matthew 11:29-30, Jesus admits that his way imposes a yoke on the Christian disciple, but it is a yoke that is sweet and easy. In Prol 46–49, Benedict gives this same teaching a wonderful existential interpretation (see notes). The expression "yoke of the Rule" is also found in *vit. Mac.* 2. Galatians 5:1 speaks of the "yoke of slavery" which a person can put on himself; life itself imposes yokes which cannot be avoided, but which can be transformed if they are freely accepted in the spirit of Christ (Böckmann, 7.176-177).

protracted discernment (morosam deliberationem) refers to the full year of the novitiate. On the one hand Benedict goes to great lengths to make sure the novice has sufficient time to think over what he is about to do; on the other, once he has done it, he will not let him off the hook for any reason. See *Index:* Consideration.

17.

Verse 17 begins the profession ceremony, where the legal is firmly embedded in the liturgical. Compared with the tradition, Benedict has welded disparate parts into a coherent whole. This is done by means of relative, syntactic words (Böckmann, 7.177), some of which I have omitted to produce a readable English translation.

The one to be received (suscipiendus). I follow Vogüé in giving this gerundive a conditional implication: the novice must not be received unless he has made these promises.

stability (de stabilitate). As a matter of fact, the novice has already promised that particular virtue in 58.9. Although earlier monastic legislators had insisted on the need for rootedness (Cassian, *inst.* 7.9; Basil, *reg. fus.* 36; Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 1), Benedict is the first to make it into a formal vow (Lentini, 521). The term *stabilitas in congregatione,* used in 4.78 to describe the proper context for the instruments of spiritual progress, is also somewhat more pertinent to Benedictine cenobitism. We are rooted in a given community more than in a given place. See *Index:* Stability.

fidelity to the monastic lifestyle (conversatione morum suorum) is one of the more controverted terms in the RB, but scholars seem to agree that it essentially refers to the traditional external practices of monasticism—the things monks ordinarily do. Thus the three promises suggested by Benedict are really not equivalent to the three modern vows, for *conversatio morum* includes the other two and describes the whole

life. Since the word contains the evocative root *converti,* such an interpretation seems pretty bland, but the ancients assumed that acceptance of the monastic lifestyle would imply a thorough change of the person on a deep level. On the purely philological level, the addition of *morum suorum* to *conversatio* may add a moral element to the question. Vogüé, 6.1324-1326; *RB 1980,* 457–466; Lentini, 522–523; Nowell, 16–22. See *Index:* Conversatio.

promise (promittat). Although Benedict does not use the language of vowing, he certainly means what we understand today by a vow: namely, a solemn promise made directly to God (see v. 18). These promises were what we call solemn vows, since they were the only vows the monk made and they were irrevocable. The modern Church requires that preliminary promises for three years be made before the final step can be taken. RB 5.3 alone uses the term *professio*.

before all (coram omnibus). Nowadays, the consent of the community by a deliberative vote is required before a person can be admitted to final vows. Benedict does not require that, but he may imply it by the way he emphasizes the role of the whole community in the vow ceremony. Monastic vows bind the person to the community as well as to God.

obedience (oboedientia) is the only one of the three modern vows required by the Church (poverty, chastity and obedience) that Benedict mentions. It is universally assumed that the other two vows are included in the three that the Benedictines pronounce. Benedict, of course, devotes an entire chapter to this virtue (RB 5, see notes) so no elaboration is needed here.

Steidle, 10.120, thinks that the *et* before *obedientia* actually means "that is," and not "and." This means that stability and *conversatio morum suorum* simply equal obedience. Prol 2–3 indicates that obedience is central to the cenobitic life no matter what vow formula might be used (Böckmann, 184–185).

18.

in the presence of God and his saints (coram Deo et sanctis suis). In RM 89.6,11 one promises *to* God and his saints.

so he should realize (ut . . . sciat). This *ut*-clause could be either a purpose clause or a result clause, but it is doubtful that the vows are done in church just in order to bind the monk more securely. That the monk makes these promises directly to God gives them their character as vows and that makes them especially binding in their force. Cassian, *inst.* 4.36,2, wants the monk to bind himself to poverty before God and the saints.

19.

document (petitionem). Although this word meant an oral petition in 58.3, it is clear from the next verse that it is a written one here. This is not just a transfer of goods; the whole person is given to the Lord. Thus it resembles the *kenosis* of Jesus himself in Philippians 2:6 (Holzherr, 279). In RM 89.17-19 the charter is primarily a list of the goods one is giving to the community.

He should make his promise in a written petition (De qua promissione sua faciat petitionem). The two things are completely tied together: the written petition contains the wording of the vows. In current practice, one writes out the petition beforehand; reads it aloud in the ceremony; and then signs it on the altar.

made in the name of the saints whose relics are there and the current abbot (ad nomen sanctorum quorum reliquiae ibi sunt et abbatis praesentis). The term *praesentis* regarding the abbot is somewhat ambiguous: it could mean that the abbot presides at the ceremony, which is true; or it could refer to the reigning abbot. I have followed Lentini and Vogüé in the second interpretation since it seems to make more sense. It can be assumed that the abbot would be present, but the name of the saint in the local relics and the name of the reigning abbot give the document the place and time coordinates needed to be legally binding.

20.

in his own hand . . . personally (manu sua . . . manu sua). The phrase is repeated, no doubt to emphasize the voluntariness of the act of monastic profession.

if he is illiterate (si non scit litteras). It is indicative of the cultural level of Benedict's time that even after a year of training, a novice may still have been unable to write. This does not necessarily mean he could not read, but that is also quite likely. That being the case, much of the education must have been of the oral/audial variety.

mark (signum) would usually be in the form of a cross. Even today, although illiteracy is a rare problem among novices, they still traditionally "sign" the document during the ceremony with a cross and not their names.

on the altar (super altare). Just as the holy sacrifice of Jesus' Body and Blood is offered on the altar, so the whole life of the one making monastic profession is offered to God. This indicates that monastic profession normally took place during Mass. See Hombach and Nowack, 59–63. Just as the Mass offering results in Holy Communion, so the offering of self by the monk is sealed by acceptance into the community (Holzherr, 279).

21.

The same verse is sung in the profession ceremony in RM 89.24, except that *eloquium* is replaced by *verbum,* which means the same thing. The Master, however, has a long speech at this point, which interrupts the flow of the liturgy; Benedict is more sensitive to the natural flow of the ritual. The verse is a prayer to God, and that, after all, is the basic purpose of the ceremony of profession: we beseech God to give us the grace to respond to the call God has already made to us to undertake the monastic life.

Receive me (Suscipe me) is the theological and psychological apex of this whole chapter: we beg God to take us to Godself. Of course, this is the basic prayer of the Christian for salvation, but in the context of monastic self-gift it is particularly poignant. See *Index:* Accept.

according to your promise (secundum eloquium tuum) does not refer to any particular promise, but to the general offer of salvation. The Prologue of RB, especially vv. 14-21, is especially rich in divine promises. Now the candidate has responded to the offer of grace and love, and prays that his or her response will be blessed.

my expectation (expectatione mea) recalls RB 49.7, "await Holy Easter with the joy of spiritual desire." To truly long for what God has promised is the essence of hope, and the diversion of that desire to other objects is a serious spiritual problem. See notes on 4.46 and 49.7.

At this point, Lentini, 526, allows himself the following comment: "With his hands raised in the prayer-position, his heart full of love and generosity, in the ineffable sentiment of feeling himself outside and above the whole world where he can be with the God of his heart, the novice prays that God accept his total self-dedication. He is sure of the favor, the engagement, the fidelity of God, who at that moment embraces him with tender affection. And there is no monk who does not feel his soul renewed with fresh joy and moving sweetness at the memory of his own *Suscipe."*

22.

three times (tertio). As he does in 35.16-18 and 38.3, Benedict arranges for a triple repetition of the verse in honor of the Holy Trinity. This is a change from RM 89.24, where the novice sings it only once.

23.

prostrate (prosternatur). In the modern vow ceremony, the novice only prostrates (sometimes under a black funeral pall) during the singing of the Litany of the Saints. He exchanges the Kiss of Peace with each brother, asking for his prayers. In fact, several standard elements

of the modern vow ceremony are not mentioned in RB 58: the allocution of the abbot, the public reading of the vow formula and the Kiss of Peace. And some form of tonsure was also given (see RB 1.7) Probably they have been gleaned from other Rules and even other Orders. See Hombach and Nowack, 50–59. See *Index:* Prostration. Obviously, the presence of the whole community at this ceremony is one of the most powerful symbols in the entire cenobitic system. Not only is the novice received by God into a special covenant, but she is being received by the whole community. See *Index:* Accept.

he should be considered a member of the community (in congregatione reputetur). For the Master, there is yet another year of probation before one is counted in the community (RM 90.79-82). The same is true for Cassian, *inst*. 4.7.

24.

The question of dispossession was very much on the minds of the monastic legislators of the day: Basil, *reg.* 4–5; Cassian, *inst.* 4.3-4; Pseudo-Macarius, *reg.* 24; Caesarius, *reg. mon.* 1. The last named is probably closest to Benedict's directions: "He should not put aside lay clothing before he has disposed of his goods. . . . If then he does not wish to sell them (for the poor), *he should make up a charter of donation* for either his parents or the *monastery* so that he may be free. He should have nothing of his own. . . . All that he has brought with him he must give to the abbot; *he should keep nothing for himself."* (Italic words are like those in RB 58.24.) See Lentini, 529. Although Caesarius, and many other Rules, suggest that the goods might be given to the family, Benedict does not do so. In general, he does not seem very concerned about the monk's family (see Borias, 13.211-217). The disposition of the goods of the candidate seems to be the primary obsession of the Master in RM 87–90.

give them to the poor (eroget . . . pauperibus) as in Matthew 19:21. That is the last time the monk can freely and autonomously choose to give alms in his own name.

gift made in solemn form (facta sollemniter donatione). This indicates a legally binding document, but whether it was signed at the profession ceremony or previously is not evident. Böckmann, 7.198-199, remarks that it is not the ideal solution to give the goods to the monastery, for that could lead to pride. But Benedict's community was relatively poor (see 48.8), so the donation was appreciated.

Vogüé, 6.955-961, considers vv. 24-25 a later interpolation of his own text by Benedict. The verse seems to break into the flow of the profession ceremony. Benedict may have inserted it because he saw that he had

not mentioned the *donatio* of personal property and would have to do so before the end of the chapter. Vogüé thinks the matter was included in the profession charter *(petitio)*. The question of the disposition of the property of a candidate was treated of in great detail by RM 87. Benedict reduces this discussion to two verses (58.24-25), but he also deals with it in RB 59 (see commentary and especially the Overview). Unlike Cassian but like the Master, Benedict is concerned about the possibility of an inheritance that could lure the monk out of the community. But like Cassian his primary concern in RB 58, and throughout chapters 33–34; 54–59, is for complete dispossession (Vogüé, 6.971-977).

25.

he does not even have any more power over his own body (nec proprii corporis potestatem se habiturum). The argument is of the *a fortiori* variety: if the monk has given over his whole life to holy obedience, then surely he cannot possess material goods.

The same rationale is found in Basil, *reg.* 29 and 106; Benedict also employed it in RB 33.4 (see note). According to Holzherr, 280, this verse actually refers to *chastity,* a subject that Benedict rarely discusses explicitly (see note 4.64). Surrender is the real point of all the vows (Böckmann, 7.200). The modern mentality that prizes individual rights and freedom will not find this verse very congenial, but it is in a direct line with the New Testament idea of the Christian as *doulos* or servant, completely at the disposal of the Lord. See *Index:* Body, Service.

26.

in the garb of the monastery (rebus monasterii) not "monastic garb," which would not make the point that the monk now is totally dependent on this particular community. Böckmann, 7.204, emphasizes the neutrality and even secularity of *res monasterii* as a key to Benedict's attitude toward monastic clothing: For him, the issue is dispossession and not sacred garb. Of course, there is further meaning in the change of clothing since one now wears a new symbolic uniform. Cassian expands greatly on these themes in *inst.* 4.5. See Lentini, 531.

So then and there in the oratory (Mox ergo in oratorio). Doubtless, the clothes-change, which is analogous to that of baptism in the early Church, was a dramatic moment in the ceremony. It was also a denudation, which is the interpretation given by Cassian in *conf.* 18.17. Until recent times nuns would leave the chapel in street clothes and come back in a wedding dress. Monks, however, at least in the United States, never underwent a complete change of clothes at profession. Usually the scapular and hood are added to the cassock worn in the novitiate.

27.

for safekeeping (conservanda). Cassian, *inst.* 4.6, notes that one should only keep these clothes until one is quite sure that the brother will never leave. At any rate, some kind of lay clothes will have to be provided if the monk leaves after a long time.

28.

the devil's suggestion (suadenti diabolo). Normally, Benedict tones down the demonology of RM (see Kardong, articles 10 and 11) but in this passage he does not (see RM 90.83-85). Besides saying that the motivation of those who leave the monastic life is diabolic, Benedict also adds the nasty verb *projiciatur* (turn him out). Unfortunately, in the days before Vatican II, departures of any kind from monastic life were almost always accompanied by tension and bad feelings. But in this matter most monasteries have gone against "the spirit of the founder" and things are now different. In many communities, ex-members are now welcomed back to reunions and many of the old wounds have been healed. See *Index:* Devil.

29.

These arrangements are just as in the Master: The abbot takes the charter off the altar (89.27); the charter is not given to the one who departs (90.88-95). The possession of the profession document protects the monastery from any subsequent claims the departed monk might make about compensation and things of that nature.

RB 58 Overview

Someone who comes to Benedict's chapter on the reception of new monks expecting to find a treatise on monastic formation will probably be somewhat disappointed. Although RB 58 does discuss the whole initiation process from entry to profession, it does not take up many questions that seem essential to a modern novitiate. What is more, some of its details seem obsolete to our situation today. Yet there is much to be learned here if we ask the right questions.

To judge from the thorough analysis of Vogüé (6.1290-1353), the key to unlocking the significance of this chapter lies in a study of its sources. Unlike many of Benedict's later chapters, RB 58 is heavily based on the Rule of the Master. The latter derives his four chapters on initiation (RM 87–90) from John Cassian, *inst.* 4. By studying the way Benedict makes use of these materials we can better understand what he is about. First we will present a sketch of what Cassian and the Master have to say, and then we will see how Benedict modifies it.

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A. Cassian, Institute 4.3-7

Cassian begins by noting that the Egyptian cenobites let the postulant stand ten full days at the door before granting him entry. Not only that, they offered him insults and injuries besides (4.3-4). But once through the gate, the newcomer was immediately stripped of his street clothes and decked in the monastic garb. Although Cassian does not offer much commentary on the matter, it seems that for him the person is a monk from that day forward. Yet even though the speed of this event is breathtaking, it soon becomes apparent that the process is by no means complete. Next the new monk is to work in the guesthouse for a year, serving the guests and learning from the porter, who is the effective novice master (4.30). Furthermore, in the view of Vogüé (6.1291) the young monk continues to be in a state of "perpetual trial."

B. The Rule of the Master, 87–90

When we come to the Master, we find ourselves faced with a superabundance of material and also with a certain amount of disarray. Not only does he have a very full chapter on the formation of a new monk (RM 90), but he has in addition three lengthy chapters on the reception of a private monk *(conversus)* who wishes to live under a Rule and an abbot (87–89). Perhaps in the interest of space, although the Master is never too concerned about that, the two units are constructed as an interlocking pair; that is, each presents only certain details and does not repeat what is described in the other.

In RM 90, the Master also has the candidate wait at the gate for a while, but he only feigns abuse (1-2)! Again the novitiate starts immediately, with the candidate hearing the Rule read, making promises and being "received." There is no ritual accompanying this; that will come at the end of the year of probation. At that time the monk is given the monastic habit and he also receives the tonsure. The bulk of the chapter, however, consists of a long, long discourse on the monastic life as a martyrdom (90.5-76). This material resembles the fourth degree of humility (10.52-60) and also some of the model sermons provided by the Master for the abbot to use on various occasions (e.g., 13.9-40). Finally, the Master makes a great deal of the need for the novice to divest himself of all his property (90.83-95).

As we noted earlier, the other treatise on acceptance, namely RM 87–89, lacks some of the elements of RM 90. For one thing, there is no need to explain the nature of the monastic life, since the postulant is already a monk. Yet since he is a private monk, he must still dispose of his property and that is the subject of all 74 verses of RM 87. But the big difference is that the *conversus* is allowed to enter the community after just

two months. After he has carefully "deliberated" the matter (88.6), he may choose to join the community or depart. Even though Cassian may assume that the postulant makes a careful deliberation, he never says it. Nor does RM 90. Only here in RM 88 does the matter of free and deliberate choice receive the full emphasis it deserves.

Another matter of some importance is the clothing. RM 87.55-59 and 88.12 speak of the *res monasterii,* the clothes of the monastery, only to insist they must be given back if one leaves. This treatment of the clothing as primarily a symbol of dispossession is in line with Cassian (*inst.* 4.5-6). But RM 90.80 looks at the habit somewhat differently. Now it is seen as sacred garb, given to the new monk as a reward for having passed the probationary year of the novitiate.

C. Benedict's Chapter on the Admittance of New Brothers

1. A Year of Deliberation

To anyone who knows RB 58, many of the details of its source material seem familiar. Yet some things are different, and we can be reasonably sure that Benedict has deliberately altered the tradition, for he seems to have known both *inst.* 4 and RM 87–90. The first alteration is quite serious. While Benedict also delays the candidate at the gate, he does not grant him nearly as quick an entrance into the community once he is admitted. Not only is he left in the guesthouse "a few days" (58.4), but he is required to make a full year of novitiate before making promises and being received. Only at that time does he receive the monastic habit.

What is more, the year of novitiate is seen as a time of protracted "deliberation," (58.16) just as with the Master. As with the Master, Benedict presents the challenge to the newcomer by reading to him the Rule, which he can either accept or refuse (58.10). But unlike the Master, Benedict has the Rule read to the novice no less than three times, as if to make triply sure that the choice is being made freely and with full understanding.

2. The Question of the First Reading of the Rule

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the threefold reading of the Rule in RB presents considerable exegetical problems. The main difficulty occurs when the Rule is read to the novice after two months, that is, the first reading. Although it happens after sixty days of the novice-year have passed, it sounds very much as if it happens at the beginning. For the novice is told: "Here is the law you want to serve under. If you can keep it, come in. If not, you are free to leave." According to Vogüé, 6.1314-1318, Benedict's editorial work here betrays him. He

seems to forget that he has already put the person into the novitiate, but now it sounds as if he is just emerging from the two-month deliberation in the guesthouse. Remember that this was the way the Master handled the entry of the *conversus* in RM 87. Benedict seems to be combining elements from RM 87 and 90, and in the process there is some slippage.

To look at it another way, if vv. 6-7 are removed from the text, things work more smoothly. Those verses have the look of an interpolation, since they speak of "novices" in the plural, but the rest of the chapter is about a single novice. Nonetheless, they are valuable verses and they were probably from the hand of Benedict himself. Of course, this tangled problem is not crucial to the larger meaning of the chapter. Still, only a knowledge of RM 87–90 as a double treatise enables us to solve it on the literary level.

Finally, the triad factor has to be taken into account. Benedict often shows a fondness for threesomes, but in RB 58 he fully indulges himself: study, eat and sleep (5); eagerness for the Work of God, obedience, trials (7); two, six, ten months; stability, fidelity, obedience (17); three antiphons (22). Hence it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the sequence of three readings is more of a literary trope than a practical program.

3. Innovations toward Development

Apart from the problem of the first reading, however, Benedict has made some pioneering changes in the formation process that deserve notice. When we speak about Benedict's year of novitiate, we should be aware that not only did he create the one-year standard, but he coined the very words "novice" and "novitiate." Even though the Master has probably ten times the amount of discussion about the reality, he never uses the term "novice" in RM 87–90; nor does Cassian use it as a technical term as Benedict does in 58.5,11,20,21,23.

The same holds true for the novice master. Benedict does not call him that, but *senior,* which is a generic term. Nevertheless, he is certainly a special official, with definite qualifications and a clear job description. By contrast, Cassian places the tyro under the porter and the Master also has him initially under the guestmasters. Benedict, however, gives the novice-director true spiritual authority (winning souls) and a good deal of responsibility for discerning the vocation of the novice (see notes on 58.6-7).

In addition to a full-time mentor, Benedict gives the novice a special place to live (*cella noviciorum:* 58.5). We get the impression that Benedict is already dealing with classes of novices, since they seem to have a somewhat separate regime of their own. All in all, it seems that a definite program and institution has developed from what was still informal in the earlier tradition.

4. The Promises

The famous three vows of the Benedictine profession ceremony are based on RB 58.17: stability, *conversatio morum suorum* and obedience. Throughout the ages, Benedictines have promised to observe these three virtues and not poverty, chastity and obedience, although the latter three are assumed. Of the three promises, stability and obedience seem pretty straightforward, but *conversatio morum suorum* is not (see note 58.17).

Soon after the time of Benedict, scribes began changing it to *conversio,* a much more ordinary word and one found in the Bible. The Prophets of Israel were especially urgent in their call for the people of the covenant to turn back to their God. And commentators throughout the centuries have waxed eloquent on the need for the monk to be constantly turning back toward God. But one must ask how that would really be different from what is demanded of every baptized Christian, or indeed every religious person?

Furthermore, it is now quite certain that the best manuscripts have *conversatio morum suorum* and not *conversio.* Barrels of scholarly ink have flowed over this obscure word, but its meaning in this context has been sorted out satisfactorily by Vogüé, 6.1324-1329. He thinks that it can best be understood in connection with RM 89.7, where the *conversus* makes the following promise: "I wish to serve in your monastery by the discipline of the rule read to me." The promise of stability is linked to "in your monastery"; obedience is connected to "the discipline of the rule"; that leaves "serve God" as the equivalent to *conversatio morum suorum*.

Why has Benedict changed the terminology of the Master for this word? It must be remembered that a *conversus* is making promises in RM 89.7, so he would not promise something he already had undertaken, namely, the monastic lifestyle. That, after all, is what *conversatio* means in the overall monastic tradition. Since *conversatio* simply refers to the external practices of the monastic life (see note for Prol 49), it is really not much different from stability and obedience. In addition to this, Steidle (see note 58.17) thinks that obedience should be preceded by "that is," and not "and," thus indicating that stability and *conversatio* are simply perseverance in obedience. All of this leads us to conclude that Benedict does not present us here with three clear-cut vows, but rather a formula that simply means: I promise to faithfully live the cenobitic monastic life. See Steidle, 6.136-144; Peifer, *RB 1980,* 457–466.

5. The Clothing of the Monk

Although many details of RB 58 could be discussed in the trajectory of Cassian and the Master, we will conclude with the question of clothing.

We have noted that Cassian seems to consider the divestiture of lay clothes and putting on of monastic garb as primarily a matter of dispossession. He does not attach any particular symbolic meaning to the items of monastic clothing, at least in *inst.* 4.5. The important thing is that one gives up one's personal clothes for the common issue of the monastery. Since clothes are a powerful symbol of personal identity, to wear the clothing of the community says that one depends on it for everything.

For his part, the Master opts for a different interpretation of the clothes in RM 90.80. There the monastic garb is considered as a sacred object and its bestowal on the new monk is a sign of reward for holiness. In RM 88, however, where the *conversus* is involved, the Master does use *res monasterii* because the person is not moving from lay to monastic life. He is already a monk, but he is a private monk with his own clothing. The change for him now is to become a member of a community and so he receives the common issue.

If Benedict were to follow the usual trajectory, he might side with the Master here and emphasize the sacredness of the garb. Indeed, he might even elaborate on that theme. But instead he seems to leapfrog back over the Master to pick up Cassian's point of view. Or at least he has used the nonsacral term for the clothing from RM 87.55 *(res monasterii)* and he says nothing about the garb as a reward for holiness. Certainly the clothes are a strong symbol of property in the final verses of RB 58. As he often does, Benedict feels he must take up the possibility of a worst-case scenario to end the chapter. What if the newly professed should abandon the monastic life? The very thought seems to fill Benedict with indignation and he demands that the monastic clothing be taken off the person before he is thrown out! Granted, he is basing himself here on RM 87.49-59, where the Master deals very harshly with a monk who wishes to withdraw. The Master often bristles at the thought of loss of monastic property; Benedict seems more upset by the very thought of someone violating promises made to God. (For a survey of Benedict's ch. 58 in the whole tradition of early monasticism, see Vogüé, 6.1343-1353; Böckmann, 7.136-141.)

6. Ongoing Formation

In a densely packed and closely argued article, A. de Vogüé, 15a.49–58, proposes that the three promises of RB 58 in fact correspond to three stages of the novitiate. These three stages, in his view, correspond to the three readings of the Rule itself: I. Stability. During this period, the novice is acquainted with hard "facts of life" involved in any monastic existence. With that information, one can then make a realistic promise to persevere in the face of these difficulties. II. *Conversatio*

morum suorum. Now the Rule itself becomes the center of attention, the thing we accept or reject. In RB 73.1, the observance of the Rule is the beginning of the monastic *conversatio*. III. Obedience. This stage seems to come from Basil, and seems to indicate adherence to the person of the abbot. But more important it means total commitment of the whole person to the will of God.

In the schema of Vogüé, the three promises recapitulate the three stages of formation and therefore commit the monk to a continual formation. Obviously, one does not plumb the depths of these promises during a preliminary year of training. It is the work of a lifetime; it is the work of the monk.

LIX: DE FILIIS NOBILIUM AUT PAUPERUM QUI OFFERUNTUR

[1]Si quis forte de nobilibus offerit filium suum Deo in monasterio, si ipse puer minor aetate est, parentes eius faciant petitionem quam supra diximus [2]et cum oblatione ipsam petitionem et manum pueri involvant in palla altaris, et sic eum offerant.

[3]De rebus autem suis, aut in praesenti petitione promittant sub iureiurando quia numquam per se, numquam per suffectam personam nec quolibet modo ei aliquando aliquid dant aut tribuunt occasionem habendi; [4]vel certe si hoc facere noluerint et aliquid offerre volunt in eleemosynam monasterio pro mercede sua, [5]faciant ex rebus quas dare volunt monasterio donationem, reservato sibi, si ita voluerint, usufructu. [6]Atque ita omnia obstruantur ut nulla suspicio remaneat puero per quam deceptus perire possit—quod absit—quod experimento didicimus.

[7]Similiter autem et pauperiores faciant. [8]Qui vero ex toto nihil habent, simpliciter petitionem faciant et cum oblatione offerant filium suum coram testibus.

RB 59: THE SONS OF NOBLES AND THE POOR WHO ARE OFFERED TO THE MONASTERY

1. If a nobleman should wish to offer his son to God in the monastery, and if he is still a young child, his parents themselves prepare the written petition that we have spoken about above. 2. They should wrap the petition and the child's hand together with the oblation in the altar cloth, and offer him in this way.

morum suorum. Now the Rule itself becomes the center of attention, the thing we accept or reject. In RB 73.1, the observance of the Rule is the beginning of the monastic *conversatio*. III. Obedience. This stage seems to come from Basil, and seems to indicate adherence to the person of the abbot. But more important it means total commitment of the whole person to the will of God.

In the schema of Vogüé, the three promises recapitulate the three stages of formation and therefore commit the monk to a continual formation. Obviously, one does not plumb the depths of these promises during a preliminary year of training. It is the work of a lifetime; it is the work of the monk.

LIX: DE FILIIS NOBILIUM AUT PAUPERUM QUI OFFERUNTUR

[1]Si quis forte de nobilibus offerit filium suum Deo in monasterio, si ipse puer minor aetate est, parentes eius faciant petitionem quam supra diximus [2]et cum oblatione ipsam petitionem et manum pueri involvant in palla altaris, et sic eum offerant.

[3]De rebus autem suis, aut in praesenti petitione promittant sub iureiurando quia numquam per se, numquam per suffectam personam nec quolibet modo ei aliquando aliquid dant aut tribuunt occasionem habendi; [4]vel certe si hoc facere noluerint et aliquid offerre volunt in eleemosynam monasterio pro mercede sua, [5]faciant ex rebus quas dare volunt monasterio donationem, reservato sibi, si ita voluerint, usufructu. [6]Atque ita omnia obstruantur ut nulla suspicio remaneat puero per quam deceptus perire possit—quod absit—quod experimento didicimus.

[7]Similiter autem et pauperiores faciant. [8]Qui vero ex toto nihil habent, simpliciter petitionem faciant et cum oblatione offerant filium suum coram testibus.

RB 59: THE SONS OF NOBLES AND THE POOR WHO ARE OFFERED TO THE MONASTERY

1. If a nobleman should wish to offer his son to God in the monastery, and if he is still a young child, his parents themselves prepare the written petition that we have spoken about above. 2. They should wrap the petition and the child's hand together with the oblation in the altar cloth, and offer him in this way.

3. As regards their possessions, they are to promise under oath in this document that they themselves will never give him anything, nor do so by an agent nor in any way whatsoever. Nor may they offer him the possibility of someday having possessions. 4. Of course, if they do not wish to act thus, but wish to gain merit by offering some alms to the monastery, 5. they may make a formal donation of the property they want to give to the monastery. If they wish, they may reserve the income for themselves. 6. And so every possible avenue of hope will be blocked that might deceive and ruin the boy. May that never happen!—but we have found out by experience that it can.

7. Those less well off still do the same thing. 8. But those who have nothing at all should simply write a petition and offer their son before witnesses along with the oblation at Mass.

RB 59 Notes

T

The title in Latin does not include the word "monastery," which is added to provide an object for the transitive verb "offer."

Lentini, 536, adduces the following texts to prove that the oblation was binding: Council of Orleans, A.D. 549; Council of Macon, A.D. 583; Gregory II, *ep.* 14.7 (A.D. 726). In A.D. 633, the Council of Toledo set down the following principle: "Either paternal devotion or personal profession makes one a monk." Whether modern sensibility finds this arrangement repugnant or not does not decide the issue. Today canon law does not permit anyone to make final vows before age twenty-one. See Overview, B.

Although "nobles and the poor" might appear to cover everyone, that was not so in ancient society, where there were multiple social distinctions. Thus slaves and other groups were not permitted to enter monastic life. See Chapman (1929); Penco, 1.257-281; Leclercq, 2.33-51. See also the extensive note in *RB 1980,* 270–271; see *Index:* Poor.

1.

to God in the monastery (Deo in monasterio). This was a true consecration, as with the boy Samuel in 1 Samuel 1–3, and not merely an arrangement for education.

si ipse minor puer aetate (if he is still a young child). Lentini, 536, argues that Benedict's insistence on a solemn ceremony binding the parents precludes the possibility that he would accept a minor not offered by his parents. In 70.4 Benedict wants boys under fifteen to be supervised by adults, so that might also hold here. Yet, he is most likely concerned with

the *legal* age beneath which one could not enter into a binding contract. The exact age of a *puer* is not at all clear since the ancients were notoriously vague in these matters (see Boswell, 26–29). See *Index:* Child.

written petition (petitionem) theoretically could refer to the oral request like the one made in 58.3. Further, the term in 58.19 probably included a verbal request or the reading of the written charter. But the matter at stake here is legal, and therefore the written charter would be required here as in 58.19-20. See Lentini, 536.

as we have stated above (quam supra diximus) that is, in RB 58.19-20. RM 91 deals with the same subject, but it only speaks of the sons of nobility and it does so in great length and detail. The case of the rich was much more complex since they had to make careful arrangements about the inheritance of the child (Lentini, 535). It must be noted, though, that RM 91 does not discuss child oblation at all; there the parents are simply witnesses to the free self-gift of the young man.

2.

the child's hand (manum pueri). Lentini, 537, thinks that the wrapping of the child's hand may be a substitute for his signing of the document. Yet if all that was needed was a "mark" (58.20), it is difficult to see why a child could not make that, even if he could not write the charter. He is no doubt right, though, when he says that this short ceremony substitutes for the longer one for adults in RB 58.

oblation (oblatio) is the bread and wine presented for use in the sacrifice of the Mass. The terminology here is confusing since the children given by their parents to the monastery were also called *oblati,* perhaps because of this rite. The modern term "oblates" is not used of children but of persons who live with the monks (cloistral oblates) or are associated spiritually with the monastery, but do not live the monastic lifestyle.

3.

This very long and overloaded sentence is typical of Benedict's "legalese," a style he lapses into at certain times when he is excited or threatened by the possibility of events harmful to the monastic community. See for example RB 46.1-4; 71.6-9. Although this is Benedict at his worst, it cannot be said to be uncharacteristic. Indeed, Vogüé, 6.963, who cannot be considered a negative critic, judges that in matters of property and poverty, Benedict is much tougher than any of his sources, especially including the Master.

in this document (in praesenti petitione). This expression is unusual enough that the scribe in ms O changed it to *per petitionem*. That would

leave us with "now by means of a written charter" which seems to imply a second document added to the charter of oblation. See Lentini, 538.

Nor may they offer him the possibility of someday having them (aut tribuunt occasionem habendi), literally, "offer him the occasion of having (the property)." This sentence is not independent in the Latin, but is a clause dependent on *promittant*. The change is made here in the interest of breaking up a sentence overlong to the English ear. Furthermore, the indicative mood of *tribuunt* as well as of *dant* (give) in the previous sentence is anomalous, since they are dependent verbs—and dependent on a subjunctive main verb at that!

Lentini, 538, notes that RB 59 maintains the same order as RB 58: after the rite of offering, the matter of property is dealt with. According to Caesarius, *reg. virg*. 5–6 and Aurelian, *reg*. 47, the youngster makes this legal disposition upon reaching majority.

If the text were to stop here, the result would be that the parents have simply cut the child off from his inheritance altogether. The next verse adds a more realistic choice for them.

4.

gain merit (pro mercede sua). An alternative interpretation would bestow the reward on the monastery in gratitude for accepting the child and caring for him (Lentini, 540). *RB 1980*, 272, points out that RM 91.48-57 has a more complex formula. Both Rules, however, wish to avoid the situation where a trust fund is set up for the son, the knowledge of which could undermine his devotion to the monastic life.

Of course (vel certe). It seems that Benedict rather expects that wealthy parents would prefer to give the monastery a donation in connection with the oblation of their son. This could be because his community was poor enough that such a donation would be very useful. A very young child could hardly be expected to do much work for some years, so some kind of dowry seems reasonable. Basil, *reg. parv.* 304, however, forbids such donations.

formal donation (donationem) is a legal term, like *petitionem* earlier in the chapter. Benedict had enough experience with these matters so that he would not leave the community open to possible litigation based on oral agreements.

alms (eleemosynam). It is noteworthy that the Master uses this term to refer only to what is given to the poor (RM 87 and 88) while Benedict employs it for the gift to the monks. Does this indicate a fundamental shift in thinking on this question? It does in fact matter a

great deal whether a monastic community thinks of itself as "poor." Sometimes that simply means that the monks expect to receive alms and not to give them.

5.

reserve the income (reservato . . . usufructu). *Usufructus* is a technical term, meaning the income from an invested sum of money or a property. In this case, the parents would be entitled, if they chose, to put the money in a trust and live off the interest. At their death the monastery would be in full control of the fund.

6.

And so every possible avenue of hope will be blocked (Atque ita omnia obstruantur ut nulla suspicio remaneat), literally, "And so everything will be constructed to prevent any hope from remaining." The image is one of blocking all passageways allowing escape. The meaning "hope" for *suspicio* is a rare one, but Blaise, s.v., gives it as one of the possibilities.

The idea here is not a pleasant one, for we do not like to think of young people cut off from their rights and deprived of the choice of their own future. It must be recalled, however, that career choices in general were hardly existent before modern times. People were married off by their parents, and steered into certain ways of life that were deemed proper for them. Since that was the way things were, few people resented it or even imagined that there could be another way. Benedict is simply being realistic about the situation: since the child was destined to be a monk, it would be cruel to hold open the possibility of a different life. See note 59.4.

7.

still do the same thing (Similiter . . . faciant). Just because the parents have less to give their son does not change the principle: once a person is a monk, all possibility of personal inheritance and possession is foreclosed. Even in our time one hears of monks being allowed to "use" an inheritance "given to them." This is a complete misunderstanding, deliberate or otherwise: A monk cannot receive an inheritance and cannot even use one. He has lost all such personal economic capacity. Although the civil courts might not recognize such a situation, if one chooses to fall back on the legal system one ceases to be a cenobitic monk.

Vogüé, 6.963, considers v. 7 to be a later addition by Benedict. He wishes to extend the discussion to cover more than just the nobility, but in doing so he does not articulate the matter very clearly. Furthermore,

by calling them *pauperiores,* he seems to introduce a confusion which prevents him from discussing the possible gift of the inheritance to the poor.

RB 59 Overview

RB 59 presents a massive problem to the modern mentality, for it encourages parents to devote their young children to the monastic life with no consent on their part. In his studies of this chapter, Vogüé, 6.962-970; 1355-1364, tackles this difficulty head-on. He cannot explain it away; in fact, in the broad historical context Benedict comes out looking even worse. Nevertheless, the material is interesting for historical and literary reasons; and we can learn even from those parts of the Rule which we cannot accept as normative.

A. The Disposition of the Inheritance

The basic literary source of RB 59 lies in RM 91. The bulk of the Master's chapter is devoted to a model allocution for the abbot to give to the parents of a young noble who wishes to make profession as a monk. In his talk, the abbot is to gently and sympathetically suggest to the parents three ways of disposing of the inheritance of the youth—for he absolutely cannot retain the right to any property.

First, they can give it to the poor; second, they can split it equally between the poor, the monastery and themselves; third, they can keep it for themselves. All of this is worked out in great detail by the Master, who loves to cover every eventuality. This material is historically interesting, but it is finally tedious and irrelevant.

For his part, Benedict greatly reduces RM 91 by a ratio of ten to one, but he also changes the basic terms of the discussion. For him, it is no longer a question of parents witnessing to the self-consecration of a young man; in RB 59, the parents make the decision for an infant *(puer)* too young to do it for himself. It is perfectly clear that the child will not be able to decide for himself when he comes of age.

As with the Master, Benedict spends a good part of his little chapter dealing with the practical, financial implications of this extraordinary arrangement. Basically, he offers the parents only two options: either disinherit the boy or give the money to the monastery. He allows them to retain a right to the "usufruct" or proceeds of the trust fund, but it is noteworthy that he does not mention the third option of giving it to the poor. In fact, he calls the gift to the monastery *eleemosynam* (alms), a word the Master reserves for the poor. Does Benedict consider the monks as the poor?

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In all of this, it is plain that Benedict is mostly interested in the legal ramifications of the matter. RB 59.3 reads like something drawn up by a lawyer: "As regards their possessions, they are to promise under oath in this document that they themselves will never give him anything, nor do so by an agent nor in any way whatsoever." What is uppermost in Benedict's mind is not the human feelings of the parents, to whom the Master is very sympathethic (see Borias, 13.206-211). He is especially anxious to protect the monastery from any possible legal difficulties resulting from a monk who still in fact owns property outside the monastery. Indeed, he extends the discussion to poor parents as well, so as to cover all the legal bases.

Although Benedict cannot be faulted for holding to his usual program of synthesizing the material of the Master, in this case the result is not altogether satisfactory. In fact, most of the spiritual warmth and theological reasoning has been left behind, while only the dry and cold legal core has been retained. No doubt bitter experience caused this kind of result.

B. The Oblation of Children

The disposition of property, of course, is not the rub, but child oblation itself. There is no shadow of doubt what takes place here: an unknowing infant is offered to God in a ceremony that makes him look very much like a thing (Vogüé, 6.1356) and not a person. To wrap the child's hand in the altar cloth along with the document of petition and the Mass oblations, this is a powerful gesture. But that should not blind us to the inhumanity of the whole proceeding. Was this the custom of the whole ancient Church, and if not, what could justify it?

The strongest voice in the whole history of the question was that of Basil of Caesarea. Writing in the earliest days of cenobitic life (about A.D. 370), he insists that no one be allowed to make a vow of virginity before the "knowledgeable" age (*reg.* 7). That means an age where the young person appreciates the meaning of marriage. Basil permits parents to entrust their children to a monastic community for education, but there is no thought here of consecrating a person to God.

Despite this sensible decision by Basil, some early writers speak of children offered at an early age (e.g., Jerome, *ep.* 24.2; 107.3), but bishops typically insisted upon free choice by all monastic persons (e.g., Augustine, *ep.* 262.8; 355.3). Vogüé, 6.1358, thinks that despite the claims of hagiography, it is likely that the bishops always retained the right to insure that no one become a monk without a free personal choice.

Nevertheless, by the sixth or seventh centuries, at least two Gallic Church councils, Macon (A.D. 581) and Paris (A.D. 614), permit child

oblation. And Pope Gregory II (A.D. 726) categorically forbids a child so offered to ever leave the monastic life for any reason. Again, we are baffled by this apparent violation of human and also biblical wisdom. What can can explain it?

Vogüé, 6.1360-1362, thinks we may find a clue in Spanish church documents of this period. At that time, parents could enroll a son in the clerical order at a young age, but at age eighteen the boy had to make a choice: he could choose celibacy and major orders, or he could choose marriage and minor orders. What he could not do was to abandon the clerical state as such, which was considered indelible. The same reasoning creeps into the Rule of Isidore, *reg. mon.*, 4, by way of a gloss, which shows that the two states were being confused, as was the case down through Church history. Moreover, by the ninth century it was assumed throughout the Latin Church that child oblates would be bound by their parents' decision for life. To its credit, the Eastern Church never moved in this direction. It allowed younger and younger people to make the decision themselves, but it never took it out of their hands.

To return to Benedict, it must be said that he was ahead of his time on this subject. Neither the Rule of the Master nor any other sixth-century monastic Rule permits child oblation without arranging for a later free choice by the subject. Not only does Benedict do so, but he makes it as explicit as possible by means of a dramatic ceremony that is as memorable as it is heartbreaking.

LX: DE SACERDOTIBUS QUI FORTE VOLUERINT IN MONASTERIO HABITARE

[1]Si quis de ordine sacerdotum in monasterio se suscipi rogaverit, non quidem citius ei assentiatur. [2]Tamen, si omnino persteterit in hac supplicatione, sciat se omnem regulae disciplinam servaturum, [3]nec aliquid ei relaxabitur, ut sit sicut scriptum est: *Amice, ad quod venisti?* [4]Concedatur ei tamen post abbatem stare et benedicere aut missas tenere, si tamen iusserit ei abbas; [5]sin alias, ullatenus aliqua praesumat, sciens se disciplinae regulari subditum, et magis humilitatis exempla omnibus det. [6]Et si forte ordinationis aut alicuius rei causa fuerit in monasterio, [7]illum locum attendat quando ingressus est in monasterio, non illum qui ei pro reverentia sacerdotii concessus est.

[8]Clericorum autem si quis eodem desiderio monasterio sociari voluerit, loco mediocri collocentur; [9]et ipsi tamen si promittunt de observatione regulae vel propria stabilitate.

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RB 60: PRIESTS WHO MAY WISH TO LIVE IN THE MONASTERY

1. If one of the priestly order asks to be received into the monastery, do not agree too quickly. 2. However, if he will not be deterred in his request, he must realize that he will have to observe the full discipline of the Rule. 3. Nothing will be made easy for him, for it is written, "Friend, what was your purpose in coming (Matt 26:50)?" 4. He may, however, be allowed to stand next to the abbot to offer blessings and prayers, but only if the abbot commands him to do so. 5. But if he has received no such order, he should not presume to do anything of the sort. For he knows that he has been placed under the discipline of the Rule. He should give a better example of humility than anyone. 6. When there is question of an appointment or anything else of that kind in the monastery, 7. he is to be placed by date of entry and not by the position granted him out of reverence for his priesthood.

8. If clerics, however, have the same desire to join the monastery, they should be given a middle place, 9. but only if they too promise to observe the Rule and stability.

RB 60 Notes

T

live (habitare) suggests that they would be only guests, but in fact the chapter is about the admittance of priests into the community. The confusion may result from the fact that RM 83 has the term *haberi* in the title, which means "to consider." But RM 83 only allows priests to live among the monks as guests and does not receive any priests into the community for fear of undermining the power of the abbot, who is a layman.

may wish (forte voluerint). Lentini, 546, thinks that this expression may stem from the fact that few priests in ancient times joined monasteries. One wonders whether this is not putting too much weight on *forte* (perhaps), which is a frequent term in RB.

The controversy about monk-priests was a very old one, going all the way back to the first origins of monasticism. Pachomius, for example (*vit. Pach.* 24) allowed none of his monks to be ordained for fear of the pride that can result. On the other hand, he urged his monks to reverence the priests who came to the monastery to celebrate Mass.

1.

priestly order (ordine sacerdotum) includes bishops, priests and deacons. Those below that rank are called *clerici*, and are discussed in 60.8-9.

too quickly (citius) corresponds to the general policy of testing candidates at the door (58.1). However, as will become clear in the following verses, Benedict has special reasons for receiving priests with great care. He does not exactly receive them reluctantly, for there is no overt anticlericalism in RB as there is in RM 83. But he is realistic enough to know that it will not be easy for the average priest to submit to monastic humility and discipline. RB 58.1 uses similar language: *non ei facilis tribuatur ingressus*.

2.

will have to observe (servaturum). The future participle is used here to indicate necessity.

if he will not be deterred (si omnino persteterit). The same verb is used in 58.3 and 11, while *servare* (see previous note) is found in 58.14. It is probable that this chapter is based on RB 58. See also v. 1, *citius*.

3.

for it is written (ut sit sicut scriptum est), literally, "so that the result will be as it is written." The exact meaning of this phrase and the biblical quotation that follows is not at all obvious. One might think that a scribal error has repeated the syllable *si,* but the manuscripts do not bear that out. When it is remembered that the scriptural passage is actually a devastating question of Jesus to Judas (Matt 26:50), it certainly complicates the issue—unless the original context was of no interest to Benedict. But if he assumed his reader would know the negative background of the text, then it may be meant here as a warning. If the priest expects special treatment, then he is risking the fate of Judas. He, after all, started out with good intentions and ended tragically. If this seems to be an overinterpretation, it might be pointed out that RB 62.8 calls a contentious priest a "rebel."

Nothing will be made easy for him (nec aliquid ei relaxabitur) is grammatically anomalous, since the verb is indicative even though it seems to be included in the indirect statement. Lentini, 548, is quick to suggest that a priest will not have to make a novitiate (the same goes for Holzherr, 286), but that seems to violate the whole spirit of this chapter. Obviously, the theological training of a priest should be taken into account, but the personal spiritual development of the candidate cannot be taken for granted. Since the priest is often used to the deference of pious people, he will have to become accustomed to a new world in which no one is lionized. That there was tension between the sacerdotal and monastic orders at the time of Benedict is evident from *vit. patr. Jur.* 133–134, which claims that Abbot Eugendus refused orders, while

Abbot Romanus would wear no priestly garb in the presence of his confreres (see Holzherr, 286).

4.

next to the abbot (post abbatem), literally, "after the abbot." The reference must be to the statio, which would place the priest next to the abbot in choir and at table. Ordinarily this place goes to the senior by entry, but an exception may be made for a priest. In modern monasteries it often happens that so many members are ordained that such a distinction would make little sense. Normally the prior, subprior and novice-director are next in line after the abbot.

He may, however, be allowed to stand next to the abbot (post abbatem stare). Steidle adds the words "in choir," which may be too restrictive, since there were also table blessings and probably other kinds as well. Nevertheless, it does preclude the matter of "saying Mass," which Steidle and Vogüé do not think is involved here. Neither do I.

prayers (missas tenere) is a controverted term since it looks very much like "to say Mass." *RB 1980* makes the good point that *tenere* with *missa* often refers to the celebration of the Eucharist, and Blaise, s.v., backs that up. But nowhere else in RB is that combination used. On the contrary, RB 17.4,5,8,10 uses *missas* to mean the closing prayer at the Divine Office. It seems strange to speak of connecting the Mass with "standing next to the abbot," since the abbot was not necessarily a priest himself. Nevertheless, it is also likely that the priest who was received into the community would sometimes be asked to celebrate Mass for the community. See *Index: Missas.*

5.

has been placed under the discipline of the Rule (se disciplinae regulari subditum). Vogüé, 2.636, says that "discipline" has a penal sense here, but if that were true, Benedict would probably use the future infinitive *(subditurum)* rather than the perfect. See *Index:* Discipline.

presume (praesumat) refers to willful usurpation, as it almost always does in the RB. The matter here is very touchy because there is question of the priest encroaching on the abbot's power. The abbot probably was not a priest, but he alone had the power of jurisdiction over the priest; the latter was strictly under the direction of the abbot. See Kardong, 17.97-109; see *Index:* Presumption.

give (det). Lentini, 549, notices that this "hard and vigorous" monosyllable is used to close the sentence, giving it a good deal of vehemence. Apparently Benedict wished to make the point as forcefully as possible: the greater the honor, the greater the responsibility. It would

be naive to imagine that priestly arrogance has never been a problem in monasteries.

better . . . than anyone (magis . . . omnibus). Another possibility is that *magis* here means "rather." I have read it as a comparative, even though it is separated from *omnibus*. The commentators are split on this point.

Because vv. 2 and 5 are very similar (let him know he is under full discipline), Borias, 10.291, thinks that the text originally ended at v. 5. That would mean that the main theme is the necessity for all monks to be under the same regimen, and it would also indicate that vv. 6-9 are a later addition.

6.

appointment (ordinationis) is a bit confusing since we associate "ordination" with priestly orders, but the point here is just the opposite: priestly orders should have no bearing on monastic appointments. Of course, one could argue further that seniority should have no bearing on appointments either (see notes on RB 2.19-22), but that is not always the case. Much depends on the kind of appointment it is. Probably Benedict gets the term *ordinatio* from RM 83.6-7, where it means "appointment" or "business." See *Index:* Rank.

7.

he is to be placed (illum locum adtendat), literally, "he should hold to the place." I have changed the verb to passive, since it seems that the matter is really not up to the priest but rather to those who make the appointment. Still, the sentence may be directed to the priest, since the previous one is. One might say that the priest has been granted an honorary place, and not one that gives him any rights. In today's culture, the whole idea of personal place is so weakened that it might be questioned whether this whole discussion has any real meaning. Yet see the note on RB 43.4 concerning the significance of hierarchical place in the Rule.

date of entry (illum locum . . . quando ingressus est), literally, "the place when he entered." The idea is elliptical: the place (that was given him) when he entered (Vogüé, 2.637). A very similar phrase is used in 62.5.

This provision of the Rule has been set aside in a very important matter, namely, the choice of the abbot. Although Benedict does not mention that explicitly here, it is clear from RB 64 that priesthood has nothing intrinsic to do with the office of abbot. Nevertheless, for centuries Rome has required the abbot to be a priest and has refused to confirm an election of anyone but a priest. It seems that this thinking

goes back to the issue of jurisdiction, for the abbot has that power over his monks. Now, if a nonpriest were to be elected, he would have power over the priests of his monastery. That, of course, is exactly what Benedict desires. The modern worry, however, is that by electing a nonpriest a community would lose its "exemption" and thus come under the direct jurisdiction of the local bishop. The jury may not yet be in on this question.

8.

clerics (clericorum . . . quis), literally, "one of the clerical order." Because the verb is plural, and the subsequent verb as well, I have eliminated the singular subject, which is grammatically anomalous.

too (et ipsi). Like the priests, the clerics must also promise to keep the Rule.

stability (propriae stabilitate). Although the personal pronoun does not work well in English ("his stability"), it seems to have been a regular part of Benedict's diction. Thus in 58.17, the novice promises "his *(sua)* stability."

a middle place (loco mediocri) that is, between the last place, where they would belong by right, and the top place, where the priests may be placed by reason of reverence. Despite Benedict's protestations, it does seem as if the priests and clerics *regularly* were granted higher places than the rest. That was to let the camel's nose in the tent-door, and sure enough the clerical order soon swamped the monastic order: by the eighth century most monks were priests. Depending on one's point of view, this was either inevitable or else one of the wrong turns taken by Western monasticism.

LXI: DE MONACHIS PEREGRINIS, QUALITER SUSCIPIANTUR

[1]Si quis monachus peregrinus de longinquis provinciis supervenerit, si pro hospite voluerit habitare in monasterio [2]et contentus est consuetudinem loci quam invenerit, et non forte superfluitate sua perturbat monasterium, [3]sed simpliciter contentus est quod invenerit, suscipiatur quanto tempore cupit. [4]Si qua sane rationabiliter et cum humilitate caritatis reprehendit aut ostendit, tractet abbas prudenter ne forte pro hoc ipsud eum Dominus direxerit.

[5]Si vero postea voluerit stabilitatem suam firmare, non renuatur talis voluntas, et maxime quia tempore hospitalitatis potuit eius vita dinosci.

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[5]Si vero postea voluerit stabilitatem suam firmare, non renuatur talis voluntas, et maxime quia tempore hospitalitatis potuit eius vita dinosci.

[6]Quod si superfluus aut vitiosus inventus fuerit tempore hospitalitatis, non solum non debet sociari corpori monasterii, [7]verum etiam dicatur ei honeste ut discedat, ne eius miseria etiam alii vitientur. [8]Quod si non fuerit talis qui mereatur proici, non solum si petierit suscipiatur congregationi sociandus, [9]verum etiam suadeatur ut stet, ut eius exemplo alii erudiantur, [10]et quia in omni loco uni Domino servitur, uni regi militatur. [11]Quem si etiam talem esse perspexerit abbas, liceat eum in superiori aliquantum constituere loco. [12]Non solum autem monachum, sed etiam de suprascriptis gradibus sacerdotum vel clericorum stabilire potest abbas in maiori quam ingrediuntur loco, si eorum talem perspexerit esse vitam.

[13]Caveat autem abbas ne aliquando de alio noto monasterio monachum ad habitandum suscipiat sine consensu abbatis eius aut litteras commendaticias, [14]quia scriptum est: *Quod tibi non vis fieri, alio ne feceris.*

RB 61: HOW VISITING MONKS ARE TO BE RECEIVED

1. A monk from a distant region may arrive for a visit and wish to live in the monastery as a guest. 2. If he is satisfied with the local customs that he finds there and does not trouble the monastery with his excessive demands, 3. he should be allowed to stay as long as he likes—provided he is satisfied with what he finds! 4. If, however, he points out some shortcoming calmly and with loving humility, the abbot should consider the matter carefully. Indeed, the Lord may have sent him for that very purpose.

5. If he should later desire to promise stability, his wish should not be denied. After all, his way of life has become well known during his time as a guest. 6. But if, while he is a guest, he is found to be demanding or even corrupt, not only should he not be incorporated into the monastery, 7. he should even be told politely to leave lest others be corrupted by his wretchedness. 8. If he is not the kind who deserves expulsion, his petition to join the community should not only be accepted, 9. but he should even be urged to remain so that others can learn from his example. 10. For we are everywhere slaves of the same Lord and soldiers of the same King. 11. If the abbot sees that his life is worthy of it, he may even place him in a slightly higher rank. 12. Not only a monk, but also those from the above-mentioned ranks of priests and clerics may be placed in a position higher than their date of entry by the abbot, provided he sees their lives are deserving.

13. But the abbot must be careful never to receive into the community a monk of another known monastery without the consent of his

abbot or commendatory letters. 14. For it is written: "What you do not want done to you, do not do to anyone else" (Tob 4:16).

RB 61 Notes

T

visiting monks (monachis peregrinis). Although the title indicates that the outsiders have only come to visit, the chapter also treats of their definitive incorporation into the community.

RB 53 stipulates that all guests are to be received as Christ, but RB 1 shows that wandering monks could be a plague. Thus Benedict maintains a somewhat wary but open stance toward a visiting monk. If he shows himself of good will, then he is welcome as a guest or even a new member. Compared to RM 78–79, which is riddled with suspicion and even paranoia, RB 61 is quite hospitable in tone.

Borias, 2.35-37, has studied RB 61 from the standpoint of its literary structure and found that it is written as a ring-composition. The following verses correspond with one another: A-A': 1-3 and 13; B-B': 4-5 and 11-12; C-C': 6-7 and 8-9. Standing somewhat outside this framework are vv. 10 and 14, which furnish theological rationale for receiving foreign monks and also for not receiving them unless they are released by their superiors. Thus it is clear that the author put great care into this chapter, for the chiasmic structure is not an easy one to manage. Moreover, he makes sure that the terms mean the same thing in each of the matching pairs, e.g., *monasterium* and *congregatio* in C-C'. On the other hand, *locus* means different things in vv. 2,10,11 and 12. If one does not recognize this elaborate chiasm, one might find the chapter repetitious and wordy. Probably the literary form has not served the author very well in this instance.

1.

for a visit (peregrinus). The word can mean either a genuine pilgrim or simply one who is traveling, but here it is not a question of a mere overnight stop but a lengthy visit (Lentini, 552). There is no suggestion that monastic guests be treated like all other guests. Certainly they would live in the community and according to its horarium and customs. Despite Benedict's complaints about wandering monks and his attempts to keep the world at bay (RB 66–67), there is ample evidence that ancient monks did a good deal of traveling. In the early medieval period it was especially common for pious Christians to travel long distances to visit shrines and holy persons. See B. Ward passim; see *RB 1980,* 257.

distant region (de longinquis provinciis). It could be that monks from nearby would not be so welcome, or that there would be less readiness about accepting them into the community. See vv. 13-14.

Verse one is actually the protasis of a conditional sentence, but since this construction seems to run to excessive length, I have followed the example of *RB 1980* in making it a separate sentence. There are at least six *si*-clauses in this short chapter, giving it a rather legal-sounding character.

2.
his excessive demands (superfluitate sua). Benedict uses this word for the same purpose in 36.4, but it does not appear to have that meaning in any dictionary that I have seen.

trouble the monastery (perturbat monasterium). Vogüé, 6.1376-1380, emphasizes that Benedict's preoccupation is with preserving the peace of the community, while the concern of the Master is entirely with precluding theft of monastic possessions.

3.
provided he is satisfied with what he finds (sed simpliciter contentus est quod invenerit) is so blatantly repetitive (see v. 2) and pleonastic that I have moved it to the end of the sentence and removed it from the grammatical structure. Probably this second example is a contracted construction, with *eo* understood before *quod* on the analogy of *consuetudine* in v. 3.

as long as he likes (quanto tempore cupit) is in contrast to RM 78.5,17, where hospitality ceases after two days. From then on, one is expected to work for one's bread.

Whatever we might think about this repetition, it does show that Benedict did not like fastidious and demanding people. The peace of the community must be defended against those who would disturb it in unwarranted ways. Some "monastic tourists" are content with no existing community but spend their lives searching for an ideal which exists only in their minds. They are not meant for community life.

4.
calmly (rationabiliter). It is not easy to know exactly what meaning to assign to this adverb. Of course, the idea of a reasonable criticism is perfectly plausible, but the word also seems to carry religious connotations as well. See *Index:* Reason.

The idea that God may communicate through unlikely agents is a commonplace in many religious traditions. In RB 3.3, the Lord may speak to the community and abbot through the youngest monks.

points out some shortcoming (repraehendit aut ostendit), literally, he rebukes or shows. Perhaps there is a slight difference in the two ideas, since the second verb implies proof of some kind, but it is likelier that they are meant globally. Modern abbots are sometimes known to *ask* visiting monks if they have any critical observations to make. As for the visiting monks, they should remember that it is not possible to form an accurate impression of a monastic community in the space of a short time.

Manning, 159, remarks on the humility of Benedict as it shines through this verse. Indeed, an appreciation of outside, objective criticism is generally considered as a mark of maturity and spiritual health. Its opposite is found in the tribal mentality that fears and hates all outside criticism. Due to the decentralized nature of Benedictine monasticism, the tribal attitude has prevailed all too often. In the High Middle Ages the Church came to require a regular system of visitations for monasteries. This is a formalization of the point made in 61.4, but it is aimed at the same end, namely, ongoing conversion. Wathen, 5.343-371.

5.

promise stability (stabilitatem suam firmare). The language is taken from RM 79.23-29. Although *firmare* usually has a more general meaning, it can mean "to promise" (OLD, s.v. 10). Since *stabilitas* is one of the three promises required of a professing monk, it is clear that the visiting monk is here asking for admittance into the community and not just for permanent domicile. See *Index:* Stability.

his wish should not be denied (non renuatur talis voluntas). Benedict seems less hesitant to accept transferring monks than he is concerning laymen (58.1) and diocesan clergy (60.1). On the contrary, some communities are wary of taking members from other monastic houses and orders, thinking them to be indelibly formed in another spirit.

well known (dinosci). Just as the visiting monk has had time to get to know the community during his time as a guest, so the reverse is the case. Because of this and also because of previous religious training, there is less uncertainty about him than there would be with a newcomer from the "world."

6.

demanding (superfluus) as in v. 2 (*superfluitas:* see note 61.2). Benedict is wary of the kind of person who is a "taker" and not a "giver."

corrupt (vitiosus). Most translators seem reluctant to render this word in its full force, but it is better to be realistic about these things:

some people are morally corrupt and can ruin any community they are allowed to join (see 28.8).

incorporated into the monastery (sociari corpori monasterii), literally, joined to the body of the monastery. The concept of the monastic body is found in Basil, *reg.* 6, where it is called *corpori fraternitatis*. The same term is used by Cassian in *inst.* 1.2,2; 4.5; 7.13. See Vogüé, 2.638-639. This is the only place the idea appears in RB. See *Index:* Body.

monastery (monasterio) appears four times in this chapter (61.1,2,6,13) and many times in the Rule, but most of the occurrences are toward the end of the document. Perhaps this indicates a maturation of the institution. See *Index:* Vice.

7.

corrupted (vitientur). See note 6 above. The eviction of unsuitable guest monks is discussed at great length in RM 78, where the term *miseria* (wretchedness: v. 13) also appears. For the Master, the cardinal sin seems to be laziness.

8.

not only . . . but also (non solum . . . verum etiam). This elaborate construction is repeated from vv. 6-7. This chapter features a good deal of repetition and a rather ponderous syntax.

his petition to join the community be accepted (si petierit suscipiatur congregationi sociandus), literally, "if he petitions, the one to be joined to the community should be received." Note the slight shift in terminology: now one is joined to the community, not the monastery (v. 6).

9.

he should be urged to remain (suadeatur ut stet). In v. 5 Benedict let down his habitual reserve toward newcomers: "he should not be denied." Now he is positively eager to take them into his community.

Lentini, 556, cites an unnamed commentator who suggests that "others" here may refer to the other guests, and that the lesson they are learning is to stop their wandering to settle down. I agree with Lentini that this interpretation does not square with the rest of the chapter, which clearly indicates that it is a question of influence on the monks of the community.

10.

Probably because he has counseled that a visiting monk actually be urged to transfer his stability, Benedict may feel some twinges of guilt. Hence he quickly provides a theological justification for his "poach-

ing": the same God reigns everywhere, so it matters not where we serve God. This universalistic view of God was used for a much more worthy purpose in 2.20, where it meant that each monk is deserving of the abbot's respect.

slave . . . soldier (servitur . . . militatur). I have adopted Steidle's solution, 169, of using nouns for these verbs. The same ideas appear in the early part of the Rule: Prol 3 and 2.20. Since it was argued earlier that *militare* had lost much of its martial connotation in Late Latin, and that in fact it really just meant "serve," this leaves the translator in a spot when the two verbs appear together. See *Index:* Battle, Serve.

11.

worthy of it (talem). The term occurs four times in this chapter and must be interpreted differently in each case. Here the implication is that of honor. The thought here is parallel to 2.19, just as the previous verse was parallel to 2.20. No doubt RB 2 is the older text, and a model upon which this chapter is based.

slightly higher rank (in superiore aliquantulum . . . loco) that is, compared to the date of his entry. It is not unusual for monks transferring to another monastery to be assigned according to their original date of entry. Today it would be taken for granted that the newcomer "deserves" his original rank. If he does not, then it might be wondered why he has been accepted at all.

12.

The subject of this verse in the Latin is *abbas,* but to preserve the word order, which has *monachum* first, I have made the priests and clerics the subject and transposed the verb into the passive voice. For the third time in this chapter, the "not only, but also" combination is used. What is more, the words *talem perspexerit* ("he sees that he is such") is identical to v. 11.

Although it may seem that Benedict is repeating himself about the clergy, he is actually saying something different than what he said in 60.6-7. In that place, the clergy are given an honorary position which does not alter their position in the basic order of the community. In this chapter, however, there is a true advance in position which would affect questions of seniority. See Lentini, 557.

13.

receive into the community (ad habitandum suscipiat), literally, "allow him to live under his roof." Although the text does not say so explicitly, this must refer to formal acceptance into the community. Otherwise,

Benedict would not be so concerned about the legal ramifications. See *Index:* Accept.

commendatory letters (litteras commendaticias). Although Blaise, s.v. *commendaticius,* says these are "letters of recommendation," it seems that they are really letters of official transfer which allow someone to pass from one abbatial jurisdiction to another.

The accusative case following the preposition *sine* is ungrammatical, but not unusual in Late Latin.

known monastery (de alio noto monasterio) could either mean that the monastery was nearby and therefore well known, or that it is simply known as opposed to unknown. In the latter case, the abbot cannot be blamed if he does not know that a person is in fact a member of another monastery. Yet the whole implication of this chapter is that the person is known as a monk, so it would seem that the first meaning is to be preferred. Lentini, 558, thinks that if the monk was from far away, he could be taken in without more ado. That may well have been true in those days of poor communications.

At the time of Benedict, Church councils in Gaul saw fit to legislate on these matters. Thus the Council of Agde (27; 38: A.D. 506) led by the monastic archbishop Caesarius of Arles, published regulations substantially the same as those of Benedict. Among monastic Rules, *reg. iv patr.* 4.1-13 sets down similar rules "so there will be a secure peace between the monasteries." Ferreolus warns that carelessness in this matter can lead to continual strife between monasteries. See Holzherr, 393.

LXII: DE SACERDOTIBUS MONASTERII

[1]Si quis abbas sibi presbyterum vel diaconem ordinari petierit, de suis eligat qui dignus sit sacerdotio fungi. [2]Ordinatus autem caveat elationem aut superbiam, [3]nec quicquam praesumat nisi quod ei ab abbate praecipitur, sciens se multo magis disciplinae regulari subdendum. [4]Nec occasione sacerdotii obliviscatur regulae oboedientiam et disciplinam, sed magis ac magis in Deum proficiat. [5]Locum vero illum semper attendat quod ingressus est in monasterio, [6]praeter officium altaris, et si forte electio congregationis et voluntas abbatis pro vitae merito eum promovere voluerint. [7]Qui tamen regulam decanis vel praepositis constitutam sibi servare sciat.

[8]Quod si aliter praesumpserit, non sacerdos sed rebellio iudicetur. [9]Et saepe admonitus si non correxerit, etiam episcopus adhibeatur in testimonio. [10]Quod si nec sic emendaverit, clarescentibus culpis, proi-

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ciatur de monasterio, [11]si tamen talis fuerit eius contumacia ut subdi aut oboedire regulae nolit.

RB 62: THE PRIESTS OF THE MONASTERY

1. If any abbot needs to have a priest ordained for himself, he should choose from among his monks one worthy of the sacerdotal office. 2. The one ordained, however, must beware of vanity and pride, 3. nor should he presume to do anything but what the abbot has ordered, since he knows he must submit all the more to the discipline of the Rule. 4. The priesthood should not cause him to forget the obedience and discipline demanded by the Rule, but rather it should make him progress more and more toward God. 5. Yet he must always keep to the rank of his entrance into the monastery, 6. except for liturgical functions or if he is promoted by the wish of the abbot or the choice of the community because of the merit of his life. 7. He must, however, know how to keep the rule set down for the deans and priors.

8. But if he presumes to act otherwise, he should be considered a rebel and not a priest. 9. If even after frequent warnings he still refuses to change his ways, the bishop may even be brought in as a witness. 10. But if he does not reform even then, and if his misdeeds come to public attention, he should be expelled from the monastery. 11. This should only be done, however, if he is so contrary that he will not submit nor obey the Rule.

RB 62 Notes

T

Even though it is now taken for granted that monasteries have priestly members, such was not the case in early monasticism. Pachomius, for example, first had his monks attend Mass in the village church and only later admitted priest-candidates into their ranks. He never would agree to have monks ordained, on the ground that such a dignity could cause pride. Another extreme example of diffidence is found in the Rule of the Master, where no priest was admitted or ordained (RM 83). Even though there is little or no verbal resonance between RM 83 and RB 62, the attitude of the Master is still an influence on Benedict's chapter (see Overview, B). The tradition of priest-monks has been a strong one throughout Benedictine history and was seldom questioned in the early history of the Order in the United States. Nowadays, however, there is a growing awareness that the two states, priest and monk, may not be as compatible as was once thought.

priests (sacerdotibus) is a broader term than *presbyter,* which is used in v. 1. It probably includes the deacons, who are never again mentioned in the RB. Strictly speaking, *sacerdos* can also include bishops. See *RB 1980,* 276.

RB 62 is a transitional chapter, since it leaves behind the reception of outsiders into the community and turns to the roles and positions of its members. Yet RB 62 is obviously connected to the previous two chapters insofar as it deals with the matter of monks who are placed ahead of their normal rank. See Lentini, 560.

The fact that the Master has no priests at all in his community, while Benedict introduces them, seems to suggest that the sacraments as such were of increasing importance to the monks. That does not mean that Benedict's monks had daily Mass, but it does indicate that things have come a ways since the days when the Saint himself lived in a cave and did not know it was Easter Sunday (Gregory the Great, *dial.* II.1).

1.

any abbot (quis abbas) seems to speak to a situation where there were many monasteries. Although the previous two chapters began with the same construction, this expression probably is to be taken literally. See Vogüé, 2.641.

needs (petierit) could also mean "seeks" or "asks." The last term might refer to the bishop, for even if the abbot is himself a priest, he cannot ordain a priest. If the meaning is "needs," this might indicate the abbot is not a priest and therefore another monk must be ordained if the community is to have the sacraments.

his (suis). No other translation (except for Steidle, 169) that I have seen considers this a personal reflexive. Rather, they take the line of Lentini, 561, who says that it "clearly" refers to the community. Given the precarious ecclesiastical position of the unordained abbot, I prefer to understand the matter differently: the abbot needs a priest "for himself" so that the community does not fall under the domination of the neighboring clergy or bishop. Today we have an arrangement called "religious exemption," but it is still thought that the abbot must be a priest if he is to retain jurisdiction over the monks.

he should choose (elegat). The choice is made by the abbot, not the bishop, but not necessarily by the abbot alone. In a matter as important as this, it would seem only right that the community be somehow consulted (Lentini, 562). At any rate, the automatic movement of certain monks to the priesthood is not what the author has in mind. If the

monk is to minister primarily to the community, then the latter ought to have some voice in the ordination.

Holzherr, 291, thinks there is no connection with this chapter and the Rule of the Master. I disagree with him about that, but he is right to see Aurelian, *reg. mon.* 46, as the source for 62.1. In the Gallic rule, the point is even clearer that the impetus for priesthood comes from the request of the abbot and not the wish of the monk. On the other hand, the bishop may have reasons to want a certain monk ordained, but he should not do it without the permission of the abbot (*vit. Caes.* 1.11, quoted in Holzherr, 291).

Cassian's remark that monks should avoid above all else women and bishops (*inst.* 11.14) was not seen as a joke among the old monks. In fact, the great "danger" was to be made a bishop, which was common because the monk was thought to be above local family power struggles. It was also presumed that a monk would know some Scripture and therefore be able to preach, the role of a bishop more than a simple priest. In fact, in Gaul the monastery of Lérins became a veritable incubator of bishops (see Prinz [1965]).

2.
Already in the second verse, Benedict takes up the problem of priestly arrogance, which will occupy him for much of the rest of the chapter.

3.
anything (quicquam) no doubt refers to the administration of the sacraments, which is the work of the priest. Yet sacramental life of the community is strictly under the control of the abbot, not the priest-monk, and the priest himself may only exercise his sacerdotal function when the abbot asks him to do so. When he functions outside the monastery, however, he is under the control of the local bishop, not the abbot. But Benedict never takes up that matter, which apparently was not relevant to his situation.

all the more (multo magis) apparently because the greater the honor, the greater the responsibility.

presume (praesumat) is always used in the strong sense of "usurp" by Benedict. Here especially, where there is a great possibility of confusion between two spheres of authority, namely the charismatic (abbot) and the ecclesial (priest), it is very important that there be a clear delineation of power. It has not helped, of course, that abbots have sometimes "presumed" to dress and act like bishops (see RB 64 notes). See *Index:* Presumption.

discipline (disciplinae) does not refer to punishment but to the whole of monastic life. The priest must understand that ordination does not make him anything more than the other brothers. See *Index:* Discipline.

4.
cause him is not a translation of *causa,* but rather an interpretation of the two verbs as causatives.

progress (proficiat) is probably a quotation of Cyprian, *ep.* 13.16. One might expect the idea of "remembering," since the sentence is to be coordinated with the previous one, namely, to not forget. It is not outside the realm of possibility that the priest is here warned against any kind of ecclesiastical ambition. Notwithstanding the Vatican's recent propensity to make monastic bishops, a priest-monk should harbor absolutely no ambitions or illusions in that regard. There is no track of advancement for him except toward God.

As is indicated by the excellent note in *RB 1980,* 62.4, progress is by no means a minor theme in the Rule. From the Prologue onward, Benedict teaches a dynamic spirituality (see esp. note on Prol 49). The point here is that the priesthood ought to help and not hinder the monk to make progress *as a monk*. To be sure, the priesthood has been a great personal blessing for many monks. If the considerable preparations needed to preach and teach are taken personally, the two vocations are not only compatible but complementary. See *Index:* Progress.

5.
This verse is almost identical to 60.7. Lentini, 561, thinks that the Rule actually distinguishes between the priest-monk and the monk-priest, the former being a priest who joins the community and the latter being a monk who is ordained. Basing his opinion on RB 60, he thinks that the priest-monk was *normally* given an advanced position, while the monk-priest was *usually* expected to stay in his original spot in the ordo. Although this distinction is distasteful to me, I cannot gainsay it on exegetical grounds. In fact, the notion of the abbot having one of "his" monks ordained for "himself" (v. 1) is not particularly palatable either, but it seems to be what Benedict meant.

owing to (quod). As in 60.7, the construction is not exactly clear. It may be elliptical: "the place he received when" he joined the monastery. In 60.7, the word is *quando* (when), and it is interesting that the manuscript abbreviation for the two words *(qud)* can be identical. See Lentini, 563.

6.
he is promoted (promovere). In order to avoid making "wish" and

"choice" the subjects of the English sentence, as they are in the Latin, I have transposed the sentence into the passive voice.

choice (electio). It would be possible to translate this as "election," but there is no instance in RB of an election by the community except for the office of abbot (RB 64). Nevertheless, this verse indicates that the abbot should take the wishes of the community into account when appointing officials. See 21.1-4; 31.1 and 65.15.

7.

for the deans and priors (decanis vel praepositis), that is, to act only in accord with the abbot's wishes (21.2 and 65.16-17). Other possible translations are: (1) by the deans and priors; (2) in regard to the deans and priors. Although all three interpretations are plausible, the simplest sense here seems to be that a priest who has been advanced in rank should model his conduct on those who hold subordinate offices in the monastery.

The plural *priors* is somewhat surprising, since there is in fact only one prior in a monastery. The word can mean simply "superiors," or perhaps it refers to the succession of priors. Lentini, 565, suggests it may be a later interpolation modeled on the plural *decanis*. See *Index:* Prior.

8.

otherwise (aliter) that is, than humbly.

not as a priest (non sacerdos) could be read in a juridical way, namely, that a priest would be judged differently from a layman, which is what the other monks are. However, that seems too legalistic for the premedieval Church. Thus I have translated *judicare* as "consider" and not "judge." Holzherr, 293, thinks that the bishop was brought in precisely because a layman, even an abbot, could not judge a priest. He cites *vit. Pach.* 24, to bolster this judgment, but it should be remembered that Pachomius resolutely refused to ordain monks. It is doubtful that Benedict would have agreed to ordain them or even receive them into the community if they were not to be under the jurisdiction of the abbot. And that jurisdiction would have to include possible expulsion. The bishop is merely a witness of the case, not the judge.

rebel (rebellio). Is it a coincidence that the Master (13.13) uses the cognate term *rebellis* to accuse a recalcitrant monk of being like Judas? Remember that RB 60.2 used the text "Friend, what have you come for?"

9.

after frequent warnings (saepe ammonitus). A dean should be warned

three times (21.5) and a prior four times (65.18) before they are removed from office. But a priest, probably out of reverence for the sacerdotal office, is granted an unspecified number of warnings.

the bishop . . . as a witness (episcopus . . . in testimonio). It is not surprising that the local ordinary would be called in for a case like this. After all, RB 64.4 asks him to intervene in the case of an improper abbatial election. The Master calls in "religious witnesses" where there is a problem with a visiting priest (RM 83.18), and their number would probably include the bishop. As the next verses will indicate, this is not merely a matter of reducing the priest in the monastic ranks, but of expelling him. Thereafter he would come under the jurisdiction of the bishop.

10.

and if his deeds come to public attention (clarescentibus culpis). This phrase could also be translated in other ways: (1) if his faults become notorious *(RB 1980);* (2) if his misdeeds become more and more apparent (Lentini). The first two meanings are about the same. Benedict does not apply his alleged penal code (RB 23) to the case of the priest. That would seem to call for him to first demote the priest from his privileged rank and then to apply internal excommunication. There is no uniformity in the treatment of disciplinary cases in the Rule (see RB 23–30 Overview, G).

11.

This should only be done, however, (si tamen . . . fuerit). Benedict may wish to soften the ending of this harsh chapter due to his respect for the priesthood, but he certainly has no hesitation in ending other chapters with threats of punishment. See RB 45,51,54,58, etc.

contrary (contumacia). According to RB 23.1, a conscious spirit of defiance is the basic and only fault punished by the Rule. No other offences but this one are even mentioned. Benedict wants to make sure the abbot understands this basic principle before he expels anyone. See notes on 23.1.

RB 60–62 Overview

These three chapters present a somewhat odd appearance since the outside members (60–62) are about priests, while the intervening member is about monks who are not priests. Actually, RB 60 and 61 also go together because they are both about outsiders who desire to become members of the monastic community. RB 62 looks forward to the following chapters, which are all concerned with those who are al-

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ready members. What all three chapters do have in common is concern for community rank, which is the principal subject of RB 63. For a survey of this material, see Kardong, 17.97-109.

A. Visiting Monks, Some of Whom May Wish to Join the Community: RB 61

RB 61 begins with a discussion of those monks on a long journey who may wish to stay at the monastery for some time. This material is loosely based on RM 78–79, which is a long discussion of the same subject. Besides the fact that Benedict is not copying his source closely, it must also be said that he has a very different attitude than the Master toward visitors and guests. The latter is extremely suspicious about all outsiders, so much so that his treatment of the topic tends to slip below the minimal standards for Christian charity. We only have to recall the Master's discussion of the gyrovagues (see notes to RB 1) to understand his mentality.

Vogüé, 6.1367-1385, has noted that the essential quality of Benedict's discussion of the monastic guest is a deep concern for the good of souls. Rather than worrying whether the visitor will try to shirk his share of the work (RM 78), or even steal the valuables of the community (RM 79), Benedict sees the monastic guest as a potential blessing on the house.

The fundamental difference in the two mentalities could not be more sharply illustrated than it is in this matter of visitors. The Master has the closed mind of the tribesman; Benedict is open to good influence from whatever quarter it might come. True, a visiting monk may prove to be disruptive; then Benedict does not hesitate to ask him to leave (61.6-7). But he rather seems to expect that the community will be able to profit from the good example (61.9) and holiness (11-12) of the visitor. Despite his natural reluctance to admit new monks, he even urges such a person to transfer his stability to his monastery (61.9).

But Benedict goes considerably beyond that, admitting that a guest may well see things that could be improved in the monastery. If he presents his criticism gently, it is to be listened to carefully since it could be the Lord's own voice speaking (61.4). We probably have here another instance of Benedict's basic assumption that the Lord will speak through surprising channels. The guest, of course, will soon leave and not have to live with the consequences of whatever is changed on his advice. But the importance of objective outside evaluation is well appreciated by the author of the Rule. See Kardong, 3.85.

Although Benedict is not hesitant to accept visiting monks into his own community, he is aware of the possible larger repercussions of such an action. In 61.13-14, he warns that one must not take in a monk

of a "known" monastery without the permission of the other abbot. It is not hard to imagine how monastic feuds could start in this way, and several provincial Church councils of the sixth century set down rules to prevent them (see Vogüé, 6.1381-1383). Yet even in dealing with this apparently juridical question, Benedict does not depart from his overall concern for the care of souls. In this case, it is the soul of the other abbot, for he says: "Do not do to another what you would not want done to yourself." All in all, this is a positive and peaceful chapter; set against the background of RM 78–79 it looks positively golden.

B. The Priests of the Monastery

The same cannot be said for Benedict's treatment of priests. Of course, he reveres the priesthood; there is no trace of anticlericalism in him. But there was enough confusion and even conflict between the sacerdotal and monastic vocations in the early Church that a certain tension pervades his two chapters on the subject.

In RB 60, Benedict discusses the case of priests who may wish to join the monastery. The attitude here is essentially that of RB 58: do not welcome them with open arms! And even when he does admit them, he does so with considerable reserve. The worry is the same one that runs through the monastic literature from Pachomius onward: priesthood can undermine monastic humility. For the overall history of this question, see Vogüé, 3.291-309.

And so Benedict continually returns to the point that a monk-priest can expect no special treatment due to his sacerdotal dignity. Yet, given the essentially lay character of early monasticism, it was hard to maintain such a stance. Since the abbot was himself usually not ordained, the priest would be valued for his sacramental activity. In such a situation, it is to be expected that the priest would receive some marks of honor, and so he is allowed to stand next to the abbot and give blessings (60.4). But that does not mean that the priest should be given a permanent advance in position. Even the cleric who joins can be given such a promotion (60.8-9), but not the priest. There is something going on behind the scenes that makes Benedict fear the priest.

This becomes even more evident in his second chapter (RB 62), on the possibility of ordaining one who is already a monk to the priesthood. The spirit of this chapter is much like the first: continuous vigilance against clerical presumption and arrogance. In fact, in RB 62 Benedict pushes right on to the worst-case scenario, that is, the insubordinate priest. Far from handling him with kid gloves, he does not even afford him the due process of warnings and in-house excommunication. The bishop is called in as witness, and the priest is expelled

from the monastery. And so the chapter ends on a note as violent as that of RB 65, where a prior is also driven out of the community.

Why all this turmoil over priests? It seems to me that a clue is found in the very first verse (62.1), which says that the abbot may ask for a priest to be ordained "for himself." That remark is so strange that most translators have passed it over, for surely the priest is ordained "for the community." But the ordinary meaning of *sibi* is that it reflects on the subject, and the subject here is *abbas*. Why should the abbot need a priest for himself? Perhaps in order to insure that the community will not come under the jurisdiction of the local bishop. If the abbot is himself not a priest, then the tendency will be to undervalue his authority. When that happens, clerical authority may try to fill the supposed "vacuum," which may be why Benedict tries so hard to keep the priests in their place.

Lest this seem like the anachronistic imagining of a modern anticlerical, one has only to look at RM 83. There the priest is allowed to visit and even stay for long periods as a guest, but he is never permitted to become a monk. Nor is a monk ever ordained, with the result that the Master's community is entirely lay. How then does it avoid coming under the power of the local clergy? By a very curious means indeed. In RM 1.82-83, the abbot is called "doctor" and called the successor of the "teachers" of the early Church. In RM 11.8-11, this abbatial teacher is placed on the same footing as a bishop: one leads a monastery and the other a church. The implication is that abbatial authority comes directly from the New Testament. The consequences of this highly dubious ecclesiology are manifold, but the worst one is to make the abbot virtually infallible and omnipotent.

Although Benedict never quotes RM 1.82-83 and 11.8-11, that does not mean he is unaffected by them. Fortunately, he does not attempt to base his own teaching on this kind of confused ecclesiology, but he does see that he must not leave his community vulnerable to clerical encroachment. His means of solving this problem is to admit and ordain priests, but to keep them carefully under the control of the abbot. For a fuller exposition of this theory, see Kardong, 17.97-109.

Is this solution to the "priestly problem" adequate? To judge from the early medieval history, certainly not. We know that by the eighth century, almost every monk was being ordained a priest. Clearly, the clerical order was overwhelming the monastic order. The reason for this great sea change came not from within the monasteries themselves but from external circumstances. Because the Christian nobility conceived a great desire to have Masses "said" for their intentions, the monks were pressured to say as many Masses as possible. In fact, many monasteries became veritable sacramental mills, with monk-

priests spending half their time at private Masses. Mass stipends were crucial to the economy of many medieval monasteries. See *RB 1980,* 123,128.

Throughout its subsequent history, Western monasticism has always had a problem making its own identity understood apart from the priesthood. The average Catholic understands well enough the meaning of the priest, for one has no access to most of the sacraments except through the clergy. But the meaning of the monk is much less clear. Consequently, monks have often been tempted to present themselves as priests so as to elicit cooperation and understanding from the laity. All too often, monastic priests have simply become clergy in their own minds. That being the case, Benedict's rather strident warnings against clerical abuse can at least stand as a reminder that the lay character of monasticism needs much more emphasis than the priesthood.

LXIII: DE ORDINE CONGREGATIONIS

[1]Ordines suos in monasterio ita conservent ut conversationis tempus ut vitae meritum discernit utque abbas constituerit. [2]Qui abbas non conturbet gregem sibi commissum nec, quasi libera utens potestate, iniuste disponat aliquid, [3]sed cogitet semper quia de omnibus iudiciis et operibus suis redditurus est Deo rationem. [4]Ergo secundum ordines quos constituerit vel quos habuerint ipsi fratres sic accedant ad pacem, ad communionem, ad psalmum imponendum, in choro standum; [5]et in omnibus omnino locis aetas non discernat ordines nec praeiudicet, [6]quia Samuel et Daniel pueri presbyteros iudicaverunt. [7]Ergo excepto hos quos, ut diximus, altiori consilio abbas praetulerit vel degradaverit certis ex causis, reliqui omnes ut convertuntur ita sint, [8]ut verbi gratia qui secunda hora diei venerit in monasterio iuniorem se noverit illius esse qui prima hora venit diei, cuiuslibet aetatis aut dignitatis sit, [9]pueris per omnia ab omnibus disciplina conservata.

[10]Iuniores igitur priores suos honorent, priores minores suos diligant. [11]In ipsa appellatione nominum nulli liceat alium puro appellare nomine, [12]sed priores iuniores suos fratrum nomine, iuniores autem priores suos nonnos vocent, quod intellegitur paterna reverentia. [13]Abbas autem, quia vices Christi creditur agere, dominus et abbas vocetur, non sua assumptione sed honore et amore Christi; [14]ipse autem cogitet et sic se exhibeat ut dignus sit tali honore.

[15]Ubicumque autem sibi obviant fratres, iunior priorem benedictionem petat. [16]Transeunte maiore minor surgat et det ei locum

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sedendi, nec praesumat iunior consedere nisi ei praecipiat senior suus,
[17]ut fiat quod scriptum est: *Honore invicem praevenientes.*

[18]Pueri parvi vel adulescentes in oratorio vel ad mensas cum disciplina ordines suos consequantur. [19]Foris autem vel ubiubi, et custodiam habeant et disciplinam, usque dum ad intellegibilem aetatem perveniant.

RB 63: RANK IN THE COMMUNITY

1. In the monastery, they should keep to their ranks as established by the time of entry, merit of life or the abbot's arrangement. 2. The abbot should not disturb the flock committed to him, nor should he arrange anything unjustly as if he had unlimited power. 3. But he should always keep in mind that he will have to answer to God for his decisions and deeds. 4. Therefore the brothers should approach for the kiss of peace and for Holy Communion, to intone a psalm and to stand in choir, according to the rank the abbot has given them or which they themselves have. 5. In no situation at all shall chronological age have any part in determining or influencing the ordering of the community. 6. After all, Samuel and Daniel judged the priests when they were just boys (1 Sam 3; Dan 13:44-62). 7. Therefore, with the exception of those whom, as we have said, the abbot promotes after careful reflection or demotes for certain reasons, the rest must maintain their rank according to time of entry. 8. So, for example, one who arrives at the monastery at the second hour should realize that he is junior to one who came at the first hour, no matter what his age or status. 9. But boys are everywhere the disciplinary responsibility of all members.

10. Therefore the juniors should respect their seniors, and the seniors should love their juniors. 11. When they address one another, no one is permitted to call another by his simple name. 12. The seniors are to call their juniors by the title "brother," but the juniors should call their seniors "nonnus," which means "reverend father."

15. Whenever the brothers meet one another, the junior should ask a blessing from the senior. 16. When a senior passes by, the junior must rise and give him a place to sit. Nor should the junior dare to sit down unless his senior tells him to do so. 17. That will fulfill the biblical injunction: "They should try to be the first to show respect to the other" (Rom 12:10).

18. Small boys and young men should be given their proper places in the oratory and at table, but still kept under discipline. 19. Everywhere else, however, they must be kept under watch and discipline, until they reach the age of reason.

RB 63 Notes

T

rank (ordine). Another translation would be "the order" of the community. All through the Rule, Benedict has made references to the basic *order* of the community; now at last he explains how that order is established. Each one receives his rank by the date of arrival. In RM, the closest parallel is ch. 92, but it denies that there is there is any rank beneath the rank of abbot. See *Index:* Rank.

In this matter, the Master is departing from the ancient cenobitic tradition. Among the Pachomian monks, the principle was inviolable: "Among them, one observes not age but time of profession" (Jerome, *Praef. Pach. Reg.* 3; see Pachomius, *pr.* 20; 59). In fact, the same hierarchy had been observed by the Qumran community at the time of Christ (1 QS 6.2,9,11). Nevertheless, a set order is not necessary for communal peace. Basil, *reg.* 10, leaves it entirely up to the superior to assign the places. See Holzherr, 393.

1.

time of entry, merit of life or the abbot's arrangement (ut conversationis tempus ut vitae meritum discernit utque abbas constituerit). Although the translation puts all three elements on a par, in the Latin there are some differences. Time of entry and merit of life are the subject of a verb *(discernit)* that is in the present indicative, while the abbot is the subject of a verb in the future perfect. It is also not clear why two *ut*s are needed for time and merit. In RM 92, the abbot is permitted to designate a successor to himself and the monks are counseled to behave well in front of the abbot so that they will be so chosen! Benedict does not propose anything so absurd, but he does allow that a monk's rank be advanced due to merit of life (61.11; 62.6); even that would be considered very unusual in a modern monastery.

merit of life (vitae meritum) occurs three times in this part of the Rule (62.6; 63.1 and 64.2). By this means, Benedict avoids a strict system of seniority which can lead to a suffocating gerontocracy.

time of entry (conversationis tempus), literally, time of (taking up the) monastic life. *Conversatio* is virtually equivalent to the monastic lifestyle itself, though the temptation in this verse is to fall back on the notion of "beginning of conversion." Even though date of entry is given only as the first in a series of three (along with merit and abbatial reordering), it is in fact the main determinant in community rank.

should keep to their ranks (Ordines suos . . . conservent). The point is not just that there is an order, but that the monks should keep to that

order. Benedict is possessed of a very hierarchical mindset in which each one has a place. The amorphous state of the Master's community was not to his liking. The hierarchical frame of mind has long prevailed in the Roman Church, but we should not confuse it with the Gospel itself. More fundamental than any ranking is our oneness in Christ. Benedict is aware of the theme of radical egalitarianism in the New Testament (2.20: Gal 3:28), but he always subordinates it to hierarchy.

2.

flock committed to him (gregem sibi commissum). The abbot is compared to a shepherd many times in RB, but 2.7 makes it clear that the flock is not his; he is only an overseer for the paterfamilias, who is God. See the discussion of abbot-shepherd RB 2 Overview, C. See *Index:* Flock, Shepherd.

unlimited power (libera . . . potestate). Almost every time Benedict uses the word power, he does so in connection with the abbot: RB 2 certainly gives the abbot extensive powers, but it surrounds them with such a high wall of responsibility that in no sense are they "unlimited." See *Index:* Power.

should not disturb (non conturbet). The implication is that the community will be happy and at peace if the basic order is left alone. After all, the impersonal order of date of entry is much less susceptible to criticism than the judgment of the abbot. The latter, no matter how objective he might think himself, will always be open to the charge of arbitrariness in putting one ahead of another. The arbitrary or despotic use of power is sure to disturb the flock, as Augustine observes in *pr.* 7.3: "He is fortunate, not if he wields despotic power but if he serves in love . . . ever mindful of the judgment which he must render for each of you before God" (Holzherr, 296).

3.

keep in mind (cogitet). This word turns up five times in these few chapters which discuss abbatial power and the common order. It is always the abbot who must "keep in mind" the true nature of things, namely, that his power is not at all absolute. An equivalent idea would be "mindfulness" as is found in RB 7.10-11. The underlying message is that only such awareness will counteract the corrupting and blinding force of human power. It is ultimately rooted in the fear of the Lord, which is a primary category in Benedict's thinking. See Kardong, 8.25-50; 4.84-86; see *Index:* Memory.

answer (redditurus est . . . rationem). The same idea is found in 2.34, along with the verb *cogitet*. The indicative verb *(est)* used with *quia* and

in place of the infinitive for an indirect statement is a common feature of Late Latin.

4.

according to the rank the abbot has given them (ordines quos constituerit). Since this is the first member of the Latin sentence, it is clear that the subject is that of the previous sentence, namely, the abbot. Unfortunately, this puts his rearrangements before the basic order of entry; logically speaking, they are decidedly secondary.

for Holy Communion (communionem). The monks in Benedict's monastery probably did not have daily Mass, but rather a Communion service (see note 38.2). Up until Vatican Council II, it was customary for the nonordained monks to approach the communion rail in order of seniority.

to intone a psalm and to stand in choir (ad psalmum imponendum, in choro standum). These gerundives are grammatically the object of *accedant* (approach), but they are not logically so. One does not approach to intone or stand.

The naming of various liturgical actions to be done in rank goes back to the very origins of cenobitism: "Whoever comes first to the monastery . . . says the psalm first . . . receives communion first in church" (Jerome, *Praef. Reg. Pach.* 3). RB 47.2 speaks of the monks leading psalms in order after the abbot. Holzherr, 297, thinks that the Pauline baptismal equality applied only to the liturgy, but that is an opinion that could be debated. Certainly for Benedict the equality (that is, rank of entry) extends to all aspects of monastic life.

5.

determining or influencing rank (discernat . . . praejudicet). The first is the actual decision; the second is only an influence on that decision.

ordering of the community (ordines). Although we usually translate *ordo* as "rank," here it seems to refer to the process of placing people in their rank.

Jerome has a similar statement in *Praef. Reg. Pach.* 3: "They pay no attention to age but to profession."

6.

after all . . . just are added to the translation to clarify the point.

Samuel and Daniel (Samuel et Daniel). In fact, Daniel is a better example: In 1 Samuel 2:11–4:18, also mentioned by Benedict in 2.26, the young Samuel does not rebuke Heli but he does tell him the negative

judgment the Lord has made on the old priest and his corrupt sons. Daniel, however, verbally flays the two old lechers (not priests) in Babylon before condemning them (Dan 13:44-62). In RB 3.3, the young are expected to speak up in the monastic chapter and their opinion is valued.

7.

after careful reflection (altiori consilio). Another possibility would be "special consideration," but I believe that Steidle, 171, has it right: the meaning of *altiori* here is "deeper" and not higher in the sense of overriding the basic order.

entry (convertuntur). Here *converti* seems to have its primitive sense of "conversion" from the world to the religious life.

Vogüé, 2.645, points out that this is the third time that Benedict repeats this particular point. Either he thinks that the reader is obtuse or that the point needs emphasis. Here again, the abbatial exceptions are presented before the essential order determined by entry. In my estimation, this tendency mars chapter 63.

8.

junior (juniorem). As this example spells it out, monastic seniority has nothing to do with chronological age nor worldly status. It does not even have to do with date of profession, but simply with date of arrival (Lentini, 574). This arrangement has the advantage of removing cenobitic rank from any hint of prejudice or preferment, which can be seen as an implementation of the oneness in Christ taught by the New Testament. But to put too much emphasis on hierarchical rank in the community can undermine the same gospel egalitarianism. See *Index:* Junior.

9.

boys (pueri). Benedict's principle of rank by time of arrival comes up against a problem in the case of children. Although minors probably became full members upon arrival at the monastery (Lentini, 574), they still required discipline and training. Such tutelage was to be provided by all the adult members of the monastery. That is in contradiction to Basil's principle that only selected monks are allowed to guide the children (*reg.* 7), but it corresponds to the traditional rearing of children by the whole tribe or village.

Borias, 10.293, has shown that vv. 1-9 are structured by a triple-inclusion, with vv. 7-9 repeating in inverse order the themes of v. 1: (a) Let them keep to their order (b) which is determined by date of entry

(c) as the abbot determines. The remaining verses of the chapter seem to be a commentary on v. 10: The juniors are to honor the seniors and be loved by them. This additional casuistry is not by another hand, but clearly in the style of Benedict himself. Yet it could also be said that vv. 10-19 are more than a mere addendum, for they tell *how* the monks are to relate to one another within the hierarchical framework (Holzherr, 296). Moreover, the final chapters of the Rule (69–72) continue this discussion.

10.

honorent (respect) seems to be precisely the kind of honor that is owed to another in view of their position or office. The term is rarely used by the Master except in reference to the abbot. As for Benedict, he often uses *honor* for God, but also for other people besides the abbot. See 23.203; also see notes 4.8 and 53.2. For a detailed study of junior/senior relations in RB, see M. Matthei and E. Contreras, 31–67. The importance of "honor" in Mediterranean culture should not be underestimated (see note 43.12).

seniors (priores). Throughout this chapter, Benedict uses *prior* to mean a monk who has precedence of rank over another monk. Elsewhere, of course, the term can mean the first in command. In modern monastic parlance, "prior" refers to the chief lieutenant of the abbot (RB 65), who is called *praepositus* by Benedict. See *Index:* Prior.

love (diligere). Of course, the juniors must also love the seniors, but the fact that Benedict does not simply say they should love one another shows that he does not consider their relations to be perfectly symmetrical. See *Index:* Love.

juniors (minores). The author uses both the words *junior* (five times) and *minor* (twice) in this chapter to designate a monk who is in a lower rank by date of entry. Since v. 10 follows immediately on v. 9, which discusses children, one is tempted to understand *minor* here in the same way. And in fact it is used to refer to children in 30T and 39.10, but the context makes it clear that *minor* here simply means "junior" by rank. See *Index:* Junior.

11.

address one another (appellatione nominum), literally, "the calling of names." The word *nomen* seems to have two different meanings in this verse: the first one, seen here, is positive and the second one is negative ("simple name"). Vogüé, 646, cites Ferrandus, *vit. Fulg.* 53, which says that the abbot never abused his office by calling the brothers by their simple names. Nowadays, many monks prefer to be called by

their simple names, the use of titles being seen as something artificial and awkward. No doubt these matters fluctuate from age to age.

12.

brother (fratrum). This is Benedict's favorite term for all the monks, and it is used over a hundred times in RB. It is a very useful word for cenobites, since it connotes a horizontal relationship of equal members. Although Benedict seems to invoke the title "brother" as a remembrance of the early Church, the title was not used in the first Christian centuries (Holzherr, 297). Today only the nonordained members in our monasteries are called "brother," the priests being called "father." Since there is now only one class of monks, one wonders whether a common title could not be found, or perhaps no title at all? See *Index:* Brother.

nonnus (nonnus). As he does throughout this chapter, Benedict maintains a policy of nonreciprocity in the matter of names. As Lentini, 576, admits, however, the principle has its limits, for it is hard to imagine anyone calling a twenty-one-year-old *nonnus,* which means "old man." On the other hand, an aged monk might find it invigorating to be called "brother." *Nonno/a* has endured in Italian, where it means "grandfather/mother." In French, German and English, the feminine form continues in the word "nun."

reverend father (paterna reverentia), literally, fatherly reverence. Here the abstract may function as an honorific as in "excellency."

Basil, *reg.* 4, has this lovely maxim: "We ought to consider him as our father who has begotten us through the Gospel; and as brother everyone who has received the same spirit of adoption."

13.

represent Christ (vices Christi . . . agere). The claim is the same as that made in 2.2, where the abbot's connection to Christ is worked out in terms of his title *abbas* (see note 2.2). No doubt the title *dominus* was similarly derived, Christ being called "Lord" throughout the NT and in Christian tradition. The word *dominus,* of course, was also used in ordinary parlance to address a powerful man. Lest the abbot come to think of himself in this way, the rest of the verse issues a warning. See *Index:* Christ.

is believed (creditur). Just as in 2.2, this is not a gratuity but demands a strong translation. According to Borias, 8.258-259, the repetition of this verb drives home Benedict's conviction that only faith will enable the monk to reverence the abbot as Christ. See note 2.2. See *Index:* Faith.

claims (adsumptione) has a pejorative meaning, verging on arrogation or usurpation. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether abbots ever were called "Lord and Abbot" in monastic history. Monks are generally hesitant to use that kind of extravagant language for another monk. At any rate, Benedict insists that such titles must arise out of the spontaneous respect and love the monks have for Christ, and not be wrung out of them by a demanding abbot.

love and honor (honore et amore). This contains the sum of attitudes the seniors and juniors are to have for one another. The abbot is not to be thought of as junior or senior, but as the special ikon of Christ, to whom is owed our whole allegiance. Although the term *amor* was avoided in early Christian literature as being too tainted by sensuality, Benedict has no hesitancy in using it. Moreover, he uses it freely for the love that we owe to God. See notes 4.21,72; 7.34,69; 72.9.

14.

ponder this matter (cogitet). Having made great claims for the superior, Benedict now feels the need to warn the abbot not to let his head be turned by such power. Throughout the Rule, Benedict employs this kind of dialectic in discussing the abbot, attempting to balance both power and responsibility. See notes for RB 2 and 64. See *Index:* Thought.

15.

For the fourth consecutive verse, the sentence contains the adversative *autem* (however), making it virtually impossible to translate.

blessing (benedictionem). A traditional monastic blessing was initiated by the junior saying *Benedicite* (Please bless me!) and the senior answering *Deus (te benedicat)* (May God bless you). While such exchanges may seem artificial to the informal contemporary culture, they do have the advantage of promoting a sacral atmosphere in the monastery. Often, though, silent bows on the part of both parties seem to offer a quieter and simpler solution.

16.

senior . . . junior (maiore . . . junior). *RB 1980* has "older monk" and "younger," which is tempting. But is it justified, given the basic meaning of these words in this chapter? It seems that Benedict's artificial use of these terms tends to break down in the face of actual human realities: age normally makes people venerable and it is natural for the younger to venerate them. It is ordinary courtesy in traditional society for the lower orders to rise at the arrival of the higher. See *Index:* Junior, Senior.

17.

to the other (invicem). Although the Pauline text seems to teach mutual respect, Benedict uses it here to inculcate honor toward the senior by the junior. But in RB 72.4, the verse is employed more adequately to teach full reciprocity of respect among the monks (see Kardong, 23.205-206). The adverb *invicem* occurs often in RB and is a sure sign of communal concerns. In contrast, the term appears in RM about the same number of times, but the text of the Master is three times as long, so this is a considerable reduction in density. Overall, RM is not particularly interested in mutuality. See *Index:* Honor, Mutuality.

18.

given their proper places . . . but kept under discipline (cum disciplina . . . consequantur). Here I follow Lentini, 579, who thinks that *consequantur* means that the boys have the *right* to take their places by date of entry in oratory and refectory. That, however, does not mean they are not under the supervision of the elders. Although no other commentator I consulted takes this approach, I believe it is justified by the next verse. Vogüé, 3.407-408, thinks that vv. 18-19 is not a continuation of 10-17, but rather the conclusion of 1-9. That corroborates Lentini's opinion.

19.

This verse seems to imply that the boys are given their place of entry only at church and dining room. Elsewhere, they are strictly treated according to chronological age.

age of reason (intelligibilem aetatem) does not necessarily coincide with our modern concept, which usually places moral awareness at about seven years. RM 14.79-81 places the age of reason at fifteen years, so that is probably what Benedict believes. On this question, see 2.29; 30.2-3; 37T; 59.1.

RB 63 Overview

RB 63 is about the "place" of each member of the monastic community. The system that Benedict sets forth is breathtakingly simple: the one who comes at the first hour is senior to the one who comes at the second hour (63.8). Since this system applies to every member of the community, it can be described as the basic structure of Benedictine cenobitic monasticism. It is perfectly hierarchic in that every relation between persons is unequal; rather, each one is senior or junior to every other member.

This arrangement is not original with Benedict. Indeed, it is as old as cenobitism itself, for Pachomius structured his community on this

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This arrangement is not original with Benedict. Indeed, it is as old as cenobitism itself, for Pachomius structured his community on this

principle (see note on 63T). Yet in a sense Benedict is going against the grain in this chapter, for his main source, the Rule of the Master, has no trace of a hierarchical order. In this matter, the two Rules differ sharply, and it affects the whole quality of community life in each case.

To live in a hierarchical society means to have a precise place and to know at all times what that place is. One's rank, of course, is essentially serendipitous since no one plans to come to the monastery at a certain time to have a certain place in the *ordo*. But the eyes of faith see all this as a matter of Divine Providence, for it depends on one's answer to the call of God.

In order to appreciate the full impact of Benedict's system of seniority by date of entry, we have to recall that in his time society itself was heavily marked by social stratification. Even though the people coming to Benedict's community were probably not as economically diverse as those coming to Augustine's community at Hippo (see notes on RB 34), there were still large social differences among them. Unlike the subsequent situation in the Middle Ages when some monasteries admitted only nobles, both nobles and peasants were acceptable to Benedict. Moreover, once one was accepted into the community, none of the former distinctions counted; only date of entry. It is no exaggeration to call it a revolutionary system.

Even though Benedict does not invoke them in this chapter, we can hardly help recalling the Pauline passages calling for a completely egalitarian Christianity (Gal 3:28; Rom 10:12; see note 2.20). It is well known, however, that Paul did not demand that this principle be put into immediate practice on all levels of life. In fact, Paul accepted that certain inequalities flow from differences between persons, but the Apostle certainly meant to create a new community in the Church with equality in Christ the essential characteristic.

For his part, Benedict excludes more thoroughly than Paul the distinctions that the world makes. Of course, he can do this because he is creating an intentional community and not a church. But Benedict does not think that equality in Christ should abolish all distinctions within the new community. Perhaps he is repelled by the spectacle of the Master's community, in which no one has a special "place" except the abbot. In effect, that means that no one has any status in that community.

By contrast, *everyone* has a special place in Benedict's community. True, that place might be the last one if one arrived last, but it is still a place. And it is the monk's rightful place which can only be taken from him when he proves by his conduct or attitude that he does not deserve it (see notes for RB 43). In fact, it is only in this context of assured rank that displacement or excommunication has any meaning.

Yet Benedict does not present this as an ironclad system admitting of no exception. In both RB 2 and 63, he speaks of the abbot's privilege of promotion or demotion, but he hastens to note that such readjustment should not be done frivolously (63.2). Although chronological age is definitely excluded as the basic principle of rank, the author recognizes that some attention must be paid to this factor in community life (63.9,18-19). In fact, it is hard to tell at times whether Benedict is talking about chronological age or date of entry (63.15-17). And he seems too quick to modify his basic principle with abbatial discretion (see note 63.7).

It would not be realistic to ignore the fact that the modern sensibility is not attracted to hierarchy. At least in the Western world, the general tendency is toward democracy and a leveling of social differences. Therefore, it is quite possible that the contemporary reader will find RB 63 irrelevant and artificial. Would it not be better to forget all these distinctions as much as possible since we are all one in Christ? Granted, we must have superiors, but must we have seniors and juniors? What do such things mean in the light of the gospel?

There is really no theological reason for hierarchy as such. One can argue that some people have a felt need for a well-defined place in the group, but others may actually prefer a looser arrangement. In fact, seniority is not much stressed in most modern monastic communities. But it has also been noted that some of the newcomers to monasteries find it hard to know where their place is in the group and would actually appreciate *more* differentiation, not less.

Finally, it cannot be denied that Benedict's system at least recognizes that time itself usually makes people wiser and more venerable. Hence date of entry is honored by seniority as the years pass by. Unlike the Master, who honors only the abbot, Benedict honors the seniors. In fact, he entrusts them with real spiritual authority, as is clear in RB 21 and 46. The Master says we are to "outstrip one another in honoring (guests)" (65.8), but he offers very little honor to monks. For his part, Benedict mostly restricts honor to seniors (63.10), but that includes almost everyone.

LXIV: DE ORDINANDO ABBATE

[1]In abbatis ordinatione illa semper consideretur ratio ut hic constituatur quem sive omnis concors congregatio secundum timorem Dei, sive etiam pars quamvis parva congregationis saniore consilio elegerit.

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[2]Vitae autem merito et sapientiae doctrina eligatur qui ordinandus est, etiam si ultimus fuerit in ordine congregationis.

[3]Quod si etiam omnis congregatio vitiis suis—quod quidem absit—consentientem personam pari consilio elegerit, [4]et vitia ipsa aliquatenus in notitia episcopi ad cuius dioecesim pertinet locus ipse vel ad abbates aut christianos vicinos claruerint, [5]prohibeant pravorum praevalere consensum, sed domui Dei dignum constituant dispensatorem, [6]scientes pro hoc se recepturos mercedem bonam, si illud caste et zelo Dei faciant, sicut e diverso peccatum si neglegant.

[7]Ordinatus autem abbas cogitet semper quale onus suscepit et cui *redditurus est rationem vilicationis* suae, [8]sciatque sibi oportere prodesse magis quam praeesse. [9]Oportet ergo eum esse doctum lege divina, ut sciat et sit unde *proferat nova et vetera,* castum, sobrium, misericordem, [10]et semper *superexaltet misericordiam iudicio,* ut idem ipse consequatur. [11]Oderit vitia, diligat fratres. [12]In ipsa autem correptione prudenter agat et ne quid nimis, ne dum nimis eradere cupit aeruginem frangatur vas; [13]suamque fragilitatem semper suspectus sit, memineritque *calamum quassatum non conterendum.* [14]In quibus non dicimus ut permittat nutriri vitia, sed prudenter et cum caritate ea amputet, ut viderit cuique expedire sicut iam diximus, [15]et studeat plus amari quam timeri.

[16]Non sit turbulentus et anxius, non sit nimius et obstinatus, non sit zelotypus et nimis suspiciosus, quia numquam requiescit; [17]in ipsis imperiis suis providus et consideratus, et sive secundum Deum sive secundum saeculum sit opera quam iniungit, discernat et temperet, [18]cogitans discretionem sancti Iacob dicentis: *Si greges* meos *plus in ambulando fecero laborare, morientur cuncti una die.* [19]Haec ergo aliaque testimonia discretionis matris virtutum sumens, sic omnia temperet ut sit et fortes quod cupiant et infirmi non refugiant.

[20]Et praecipue ut praesentem regulam in omnibus conservet, [21]ut dum bene ministraverit audiat a Domino quod servus bonus qui erogavit triticum conservis suis in tempore suo: [22]*Amen dico vobis,* ait, *super omnia bona sua constituit eum.*

RB 64: THE INSTALLATION OF THE ABBOT

1. In the installation of an abbot, the proper method is always to appoint the one whom the whole community agrees to choose in the fear of God. Or a part of the community, no matter how small, may make the choice if they possess sounder judgment. 2. Let the candidate be chosen for merit of life and wisdom of teaching, even if he hold the last rank in the community.

3. But it can happen that a whole community may conspire to choose a person who will go along with their vices—may it never happen! 4. If those goings-on somehow come to the notice of the local diocesan bishop, or to the abbots or Christians of the district, 5. they must block the evildoers from succeeding in their scheme. They should instead set a worthy steward over the house of God. 6. And they may be sure that they will receive a good reward for this deed if they have done it out of pure motives and godly zeal. But if they neglect their duty, they will be punished.

7. Once he has been installed, the abbot must constantly keep in mind what a burden he has undertaken and to whom he will have to *give a reckoning of his stewardship* (Luke 16:2). 8. And he should realize that he must profit others rather than precede them. 9. Therefore he must be learned in the Divine Law so he will know how to *bring forth things both old and new* (Matt 13:52). He should be chaste, temperate and merciful, 10. and always *put mercy before judgment* (Jas 2:13) so that he himself may obtain the former. 11. He should hate vices but love the brothers. 12. When he must correct someone, he should act prudently and *not overdo it.* If he is too vigorous in removing the rust, he may break the vessel. 13. Let him always be wary of his own brittleness, and remember not to break the bent reed. 14. We do not mean he should permit vices to flourish but that he should prune them with prudence and charity. As we said previously, he must use the method best suited to the individual. 15. He should aim more at being loved than feared. 16. He should not be restless and troubled, not extreme and headstrong, not jealous and oversuspicious; for then he will have no peace. 17. In his commands he should be farsighted and thoughtful. And whether it is a question of spiritual or material matters, he should give prudent and moderate orders. 18. He should meditate on the prudence of holy Jacob, who said: *If I make my flock walk too far, they will all die in one day* (Gen 33:13). 19. Taking heed of these and other passages that extol discretion, the mother of virtues, he should arrange everything so that the strong are challenged and the feeble are not overwhelmed.

20. Most of all, he should keep to the present Rule in all things. 21. Then, when he has managed his office well, he will hear from the Lord what the good servant heard, who distributed grain to his fellow servants on time: 22. *Yes, I tell you,* he says *he sets him over his whole estate* (Matt 24:47).

RB 64 Notes

T

installation (ordinatio). This term does not match either the English

"ordination" or "election." Rather it includes the whole process of placing the person at the head of the monastic community (Blaise, s.v. 5). The chapter discusses the election of the abbot, but does not make this process normative. And although there was undoubtedly a ceremony whereby the local bishop "seated" the abbot, there was no liturgical ordination (see Gregory the Great, *ep.* 3.23; 9.20). See Lentini, 580. "Installation" is the translation of RM 93T by L. Eberle, but the Master handles the abbatial succession very differently: the abbot chooses his own successor.

1.

appoint (constituatur) is a synonym for *ordinatio,* referring to agreement of the bishop or other abbots to the choice of the community (Vogüé, 2.648). On the technical vocabulary employed here see *RB 1980,* 370–378.

the proper method (consideretur ratio). Benedict uses similar phrases in 24.4 and 53.4. Since the appointment of the abbot is so crucial to the well-being of the community, it cannot be left to chance or to the machinations of ambitious people. In modern monasteries, the election process is carefully determined by the law of the congregation and by canon law.

small part . . . better judgment (pars quamvis parva . . . saniore consilio). I have made this a second sentence, although it is part of the first sentence in the original. The surprising idea that an elite group might be allowed to choose the abbot is also found in the imperial decree of Justinian from the same period: *omnes monachi (vel) melioris opinionis existentes eligant* (*nov.* 123.34). Lentini, 581–582, assumes that there has been an election, but that no majority has been attained. He thinks that the only way around such an impasse would be for the diocesan bishop and/or local abbots to choose one candidate. They are to intervene in a wicked election (64.3-6) and 65.3 names them as the ones who appoint the abbot.

Manning, 169–170, is so reluctant to admit that a minority could be decisive that he finds the unusual meaning "stronger" for *sanior* and thus claims that it means "even a slight majority."

the whole community (omnis concors congregatio) need not be every single person, but rather a majority of some kind (Lentini, 580).

in the fear of God (secundum timorem Dei) is never a casual expression in RB but virtually equivalent to the faith that must lie at the heart of monastic life. See Kardong, 8.25-50; see *Index:* Fear.

no matter how small (quamvis parva). Obviously, Benedict is no admirer of democracy. While it is true that numbers are no guarantee of

wisdom, canon law and most modern persons prefer that the majority exercise its judgment. The principle is that people are more likely to accept a decision in which they have had a part.

make the choice (elegerit). This choice is not definitive, but must be ratified by a higher authority, in RB 64 no doubt the bishop and other abbots. Throughout monastic history, many different methods of choosing abbots have been used, but wherever the monks are bypassed, the spirit of cenobitic monasticism is violated. In modern times, the president of a monastic congregation normally presides over an abbatial election and is able to ratify the results. Formerly, all elections had to be ratified by the Holy See.

candidate (ordinandus), literally, "the one to be installed." I have adopted the neat rendition of Schmitz, 145.

merit of life and wisdom of teaching (Vitae . . . merito et sapientiae doctrina) are the same qualifications required for the deans in 21.4. Even more than for deans, the abbot must combine both good example and spiritual learning. The combination of lived example and holy doctrine is discussed at greater length in 2.11-15 in the first abbatial directory. See *Index:* Merit, Wisdom.

last rank in the community (ultimus . . . in ordine congregationis). In this matter, Benedict is not in line with the mainstream of earlier monastic tradition, which often allowed the abbot to choose his successor. This is especially true of RM 93, but also mentioned by Cassian in *inst.* 4.28. Pachomius also chose his own successor. But in Benedict's time, the decrees of the emperor Justinian (*cod.* 1.3,46; *nov.* 123.34) expressly forbade the exclusion of anyone from election due to lack of seniority.

3.

But it can happen that a whole community (Quod si etiam omnis congregatio). In order to shorten the period, I have converted the conditional clause into an independent sentence. The point is that even a unanimous choice by a group of monks may not be guided by the Holy Spirit, but by evil designs.

4.

those goings-on (vitia ipsa). *Vitia* seems to have a slightly different meaning here than it had in the previous verse. There it meant evil habits, but here it seems to refer to the entire corrupt election process.

abbots or Christians of the district (ad abbates aut Christianos vicinos). The abbots could also be tied to the bishop grammatically, but since

only nearby abbots would be involved, it seems logical to connect them with "neighboring" Christians. In modern times, most monasteries belong to congregations, which oversee their own affairs, but up until the late Middle Ages abbeys did not form congregations to police themselves. Exactly how the lay Christians of the district could enter into the affairs of a monastery is not clear.

local diocesan bishop (episcopi ad cuius dioecesim pertinet locus ipse), literally, "the bishop to whose diocese the place belongs." The technical term for this person is "local ordinary." According to the exemption of religious communities as provided in modern canon law, the local ordinary cannot intervene except in the most extraordinary circumstances. Of course, Benedict is speaking here of just that sort of thing. In Benedict's day, the local bishop installed the abbot (64.1-2) and the neighboring abbots may have been present as well (65.3). The term "somehow" seems to indicate that they have found out later that the election was tainted.

worthy steward over the house of God (domui Dei . . . dispensatorem). Mention of the abbot as steward reminds one of Luke 12:42, where the manager of the estate is commended for being ready for the master's return. In this case, an abbot has been elected who is not a faithful steward and now a better replacement must be found. The notion of steward is comparable to the shepherd of RB 2.7: neither of them have absolute domain but must answer to the Lord. See *Index:* Steward.

6.

good reward (mercedem bonam). Merit theology is not fashionable in our time, but it is fairly common in RB. While it is true that good deeds for their own sake or for the love of God are more commendable, those motives are taken care of in the second part of the verse. See *Index:* Merit.

pure motive (caste). It is obvious that sexual purity is not in question here, but rather the lack of impure motives. The same seems to be true in 72.8, where the meaning is less clear.

they will be punished (se recepturos . . . peccatum). Another possibility is: "they will commit a sin." The two mentions of God in vv. 5-6 give the passage a very solemn tone. It is a serious situation, for a bad abbot is often the ruination of a community.

7.

At this point, the subject changes from abbatial succession to the qualities needed in an abbot. The directives given to the new abbot in vv. 7-22 are somewhat different than those given in RB 2. The reason seems to be that Benedict now had a broader experience of cenobitic

life. Moreover, rather than basing himself on the master/disciple relation that he followed in RB 2, he now looks to the more normative cenobitic models of Pachomius, Basil and Augustine. In this approach, the abbot is the servant and overseer of the community, who keeps the parts in harmony by means of his charity and spiritual discernment. See Holzherr, 302.

Lentini, 585–586, calls the following section on the abbot "one of the most stupendous pages of Christian literature, in which the supernatural inspiration of prudence and charity is joined to the wisdom of a profound knowledge of the human heart." Certainly the tone of this material is warmer and less stern than that of RB 2, which is also on the abbot. Presumably the author has learned something from his years of governing a monastery. Borias, 18.222-225, considers this one of the most mature of Benedict's chapters.

Borias, 10.294, also notes that v. 7 resembles v. 1 in several ways: Only these verses use *abbas;* both use *ratio,* but to mean different things; both contain the idea of pondering. But instead of forming an inclusion, v. 7 begins a new section, and it is a rather different section than 1-6, being much more positive in tone and being based on Augustinian thought rather than the procedures of the Master.

keep in mind (cogitet) occurs fairly often in Benedict's Rule. It will be noticed that most of these passages occur in this part of the document. The word is almost always used to indicate the need for the superior to think seriously about his duty. It is closely connected with Benedict's concept of memory (see note 7.10). See *Index:* Memory, Thought.

undertaken (suscepit) is sometimes translated "receive" (Vogüé, Lentini, Schmitz, Rochais), but seems to have an active meaning here. The abbot has not just been chosen, but he has accepted the task. See *Index:* Accept.

This verse contains a reminiscence of *reg. serv.* 7.3, the first of several Augustinian overtones in this chapter. It is significant that Benedict is under different influence in this second chapter on the abbot, RB 2 having been heavily based on the Rule of the Master.

stewardship (vilicationis). Although a different term is employed here, the idea is the same as what was seen in v. 5: the abbot is in no way autonomous but always subject to the scrutiny of the real master of the monastery, who is God. See *Index:* Steward.

8.

profit . . . precede (prodesse . . . praeesse). This is probably a reminiscence of a similar aphorism from Augustine's *ep.* 340.1. The saying

may have been a commonplace, however, since it is also found in Augustine, *civ.* 19.19; *c. Faust.* 22.56; Gregory the Great, *Past.* 2.6. It is strange, though, that the dictionary meanings of the two Latin terms (see OLD, s.v.) are remarkably the same: to come forth first. Even though my translation abandons the Latin jingle, it does attempt to retain the primary connotation of the words, with the obvious distinction between help and hauteur.

The servant character of monastic authority is the obverse side of obedience; neither of them can be understood on the model of political power structures. Holzherr, 302.

he should realize (sciatque) is a term that appears three times in RB 2.7,31,37. Benedict is at pains to warn the superior to not succumb to the obvious seductions of power.

9.

Therefore (ergo). If this connective is taken at full value, the abbot's biblical learning is seen as a prime example of how he "helps" the community. In the early Church, a knowledge of Scripture was considered a more important attribute for leadership than some other abilities that were more admired in later ages.

learned in the Divine Law (doctum lege divina). As in RB 2.5, the abbot is told that he must be learned in the Holy Scriptures, meaning not scholarship so much as sapiential insight. The term "Law" for Scripture goes back to the Jewish Bible, which uses it for the Torah itself (see Ps 119).

will know how to bring forth (ut sciat et sit unde proferat). A more literal translation could be "will know, and personally be, a treasury of Scripture."

new and old (nova et vetera) is a quote from Matthew 13:52, which describes the ideal Christian scribe, who must be learned in both the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Matthew is more interested than some of the other NT writers to maintain continuity with the Jewish heritage. For Benedict, however, the reference is merely to the Bible as a whole.

The concept of "old and new" could also be connected to spiritual discretion, which is the art of applying timeless principles to contemporary realities. See *Index:* Discretion.

chaste, temperate, merciful (castum, sobrium, misericordem) are virtues often found in the Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7-9; 2:2; 2:4-5. Thus Benedict's model for leadership is strictly evangelical. All of these virtues refer to the personal life of the abbot, who must not only have holy doctrine, but a holy existence (Lentini, 587). Although

there are other possible meanings for *castum,* it seems that the obvious one is in place here. The last member of the trio will be expanded in the next verse. See *Index:* Chaste.

10.

put mercy before judgment (superexaltet misericordiam judicio). The Greek text of James 2:13 actually has "mercy has no fear of judgment," but the Vulgate has changed this to "he has placed mercy above judgment." That is probably the sense that Benedict means to convey, although some mss have *superexultet,* which corresponds to the Greek. See Lentini, 588. The concept of mercy prevailing over justice does not mean that the latter is completely overridden. Rather, where there is room for doubt, the tendency should be toward mercy. That is the whole thrust of RB 64, one of the gentlest chapters of the entire Rule. Borias, 12.56-67, shows that while the Master only speaks of the mercy of God toward humanity, Benedict adds several passages which emphasize the mercy of humans toward one another.

11.

He should hate vices but love the brothers (Oderit vitia, diligat fratres). A favorite saying of Augustine, where it appears in *serm.* 49.5; *reg. serv.* 4.10; *civ.* 14.6 in various forms. The vices, of course, are those of the brothers, but they should not be identified with them. The exact meaning of "vices" is not self-evident. The English word connotes depravities, which one hesitates to think common among monks; on the other hand, they cannot be harmless peccadilloes if one is to "hate" them. *RB 1980* has "faults," but that seems too weak. Benedict uses *infirmitas* for "weakness," and he uses it often. The word *vitium* occurs three times in this one chapter: 64.3,4,11. The charm of the Latin lies in the alliteration of *oderit* and *diligat*. See *Index:* Vice.

No doubt the point of this saying is the need to maintain charity in the very correction of faults and sins (Lentini, 588).

12.

correct (correptione) refers to verbal admonition. Although the footnotes of *RB 1980* (e.g., 282) claim the word is contrasted with verbal chastisement (except in 64.12), an examination of the relevant texts (21.5; 28.1; 33.8; 48.20; 65.19) does not seem to confirm that conclusion. Obviously, though, one can go too far in either verbal or physical correction. See *Index:* Punish.

"never overdo it" (ne quid nimis), literally, "never too much." This common Greek aphorism is found in the Roman playwright Terence (*Andria,* 11.34), and also in many Christian writers (e.g., Jerome, *ep.*

60.7; 108.20; 130.11). Thus it hardly proves that Benedict had an extensive classical education.

If he is too vigorous in removing the rust, he may break the vessel (ne dum nimis eradere cupit aeruginem, frangatur vas). Another folk saying, which probably does not only refer to metal vessels, but also pottery.

13.

wary (suspectus sit). The point is not that one suspects that one is vulnerable, but rather one knows it and therefore keeps it well in mind. The root meaning of "suspicion" is "look up." Benedict wants us to keep our sinfulness before our eyes (see 7.11) so that we must continually take it into account. It is a variation on the mindfulness that is such a prominent feature of this chapter. See *Index:* Memory.

Just because the abbot is a sinner, does not mean that he must not or cannot correct the brothers. If that were the case, there would be no discipline at all, for we are all sinners.

brittleness (fragilitatem). Another translation might be "brokenness." The word is a cognate of *frangatur* in the previous verse. The idea here is the same as the "wounded healer" that appears in 46.5-6.

break the bent reed (calamum quassatum non conterendum) is a very sonorous saying in Latin and also one that is rich in biblical overtones. In Isaiah 42:3, the Suffering Servant refrains from breaking the bent reed, meaning that he refuses to use power in his dealings, especially with those weaker than himself. Therefore, Benedict compares the abbot to the Servant, which also connects him to the nonviolent Jesus, who preferred to be crucified rather than return evil for evil (Matt 12:48).

The exact *Sitz im Leben* of this saying is not clear to me. Is it a prohibition against trampling bent reeds? At any rate, the bent reed is especially in danger of being broken by rough treatment.

14.

flourish (nutriri), literally, "be fed." Since the image continues with the idea of pruning, suggesting vegetation, I have chosen not to mix metaphors.

prune (amputet). The idea of radical excision is frequent in the RB. In itself, the concept is violent and irreversible, but here in the "gentle chapter" he asks that such pruning be done as delicately as possible. See *Index:* Amputate.

As we said previously (sicut iam diximus). In fact, RB 2 is insistent that abbatial authority be tailored to the individual (see 2.23ff.). It is pri-

marily a means of spiritual discernment aimed at fostering growth in each individual, rather than an objective program to gain some abstract end.

the method best suited to the individual (ut viderit cuique expedire), that is, the method of correction best calculated to help a given person. As Benedict shows in 2.23, he is aware that there are tremendous differences in people so that one must be corrected very roughly and another very delicately. One wonders, though, if extreme insensitivity or hypersensitivity are not warning signs indicative of no cenobitic vocation. Even though I have divided it off into a separate unit, this sentence is grammatically dependent on "prune."

15.

Another quote from Augustine, *reg. serv.* 7.3, which was also quoted in 64.7. Yet the full passage is worth quoting: "Although both things are necessary, one should prefer to be loved rather than feared." This can be a clue to the complexity of this idea, for there is a real possibility here for misunderstanding. To "strive to be loved" can be a great weakness in a superior if this is done out of personal hunger for affirmation. In fact, a superior must get used to the idea that some monks will not love him or his policies or his attempts to help that person. Taken at face value, love is obviously a much better motivation than fear for the furtherance of the kingdom of God. See *Index:* Fear, Love.

16.

Since the six adjectives of this verse are arranged in three pairs, this translation tries to treat them as units. It is possible to do so within limits, but nothing much is lost if the list is simply seen as a series. Granted that the traits listed here as harmful in an abbot are really character defects more than just faults to be avoided, one could make a case that this is the kind of person the monks should not elect as abbot. Nevertheless, an abbot who has one or more of these tendencies must try to keep them under control, or they will undermine his leadership.

not restless (non turbulentus) could be a reminiscence from Isaiah 42:4, describing the Suffering Servant. Since the same verse was quoted in v. 13, it must be important to Benedict.

17.

material matters (secundum saeculum). Chadwick, 332–333, thinks that *saeculum* here is pejorative, meaning "worldly." He also considers the *sive . . . sive* clause the object of the verb *discernat*. But Benedict is not particularly critical of the world (see Kardong, 30.192); and since

discernat is coordinate with *temperet,* it can hardly control an indirect question. At any rate, it is obvious that Benedict values balance and good sense very highly in a superior.

18.

keep in mind (cogitans). See note 64.7.

prudence (discretionem). In this case, and in the preceding verse, *discretio* does not seem to mean so much the ability to guide souls by noting the various dynamics at work in them, as much as a sense of what people can be expected to bear. See *Index:* Discernment.

in one day (una die). Jacob pleaded that since his ewes were accompanied by new lambs, it would be disastrous to overdrive them. Just as the patriarch was sensitive to the condition of his flock, so too the abbot should be aware of the state of his community. At times a community can handle a strong challenge, but at other times it can be crushed by too much pressure.

19.

passages that extol (testimonia) that is, biblical passages that praise wisdom. This refers primarily to Genesis 33:13, but the whole chapter from v. 7 is a tissue of scriptural passages extolling moderation.

discretion, the mother of virtues (discretionis matris virtutum). The image is that of Cassian, *conf.* 2.2,4, who says that all the other virtues lose their value when they become unbalanced; discretion provides that balance. In *conf.* 2, Cassian presents an excellent picture of monastic discretion, insisting that it requires moderation in asceticism as well as in enjoyment (2.16-17). For Cassian, discretion is always that gift of the Holy Spirit that enables one to read the "thoughts" of oneself or another so as to understand and guide their direction (2.1). See Holzherr, 305. See *Index:* Discernment.

the strong are challenged and the feeble are not overwhelmed (et fortes quod cupiant et infirmi non refugiant), literally, "that the strong have something to seek and the weak have nothing to flee from." This lovely saying implies the verb "to have" in both parts. In itself, the idea is surprising since the monastic life is usually thought of as a demanding program for an elite group of strong Christians. But this verse shows that Benedict was not interested in that kind of approach, which bears within itself the seeds of a Pelagian distortion of the gospel. Obviously, a monastic program that seeks to accommodate both the strong and weak will demand a great deal of *discretion* from the abbot, who must first of all understand the gift of each person and then find a way to make that gift flourish. See *Index:* Weakness.

arrange (temperet). The translation "moderate" is avoided because it seems clear that the author is not calling for a "middle way" that both groups can manage. Rather, there will have to be many norms suited to individual gifts. See *Index:* Measure.

20.
Rule (regulam). Another possibility is that mentioned by Butler, namely, that the term refers to the "rule of moderation" emphasized in this chapter. If the whole Rule is meant, as seems likely, then the chapter ends somewhat like RB 66, with an admonition to keep the Rule. As it stands, this verse repeats the key principle stated in RB 3.11: the abbot himself is subject to the Rule. He may be its main interpreter, but that does not exempt him from its prescriptions. See *Index:* Rule.

21.
managed his office well . . . good servant . . . fellow servants (bene ministraverit . . . servus bonus . . . conservis suis). The image is again that of the steward of the gospel, who is called to account for the way he has managed the affairs of the master. See *Index:* Steward.

what the good servant heard (quod servus bonus). The verb "heard" is understood, but in fact the passage given in the next verse does not address the servant. For that, Matthew 25:21 would be more appropriate. See Vogüé, 2.653.

his fellow servants (conservis suis). This image stresses the role of the abbot as a servant of God's community. Granted, he may be the chief servant (steward), but he is still a servant, and in that sense is on an equal footing with the other members of the community (fellow servants). Moreover, he will be judged as to how well he cared for them and gave them their due. See *Index:* Service.

RB 64 Overview

RB 64 is unique in being the only chapter where Benedict entirely reworks an earlier theme. We have seen that RB 2 is a rather full and well-developed treatise on the abbot, the spiritual leader of the monastery. That chapter was closely modeled on RM 2, with significant changes (see notes and RB 2 Overview) by Benedict. The Master himself takes up the question of the abbot again at the end of his Rule (RM 92–94) when he speaks of choosing a successor. But Benedict does not copy the Master in his second treatise. In fact, he does not even repeat his own teaching from RB 2; we have here an original and entirely fresh treatment of monastic authority. The basic material for this Overview is from Vogüé, 3.348-376.

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A. Abbatial Succession (64.1-6)

RM 92 creates an elaborate system for providing a successor to the abbot. Essentially it is a dynastic method, with the abbot choosing the monk who is to succeed him. In itself, this would not be unusual, for we find many historical instances in early monasticism where an abbot, usually a founder, was allowed to choose his own successor. No monastic Rule demands the dynastic method as does the Master, but that is not the only way in which the Master is revolutionary on this question.

In fact, the dynastic principle is only the culmination of a larger ideology in which the humblest monk is to be chosen as superior. And how is his humility to be known? By abbatial observation; so therefore, each monk must strive to appear as humble as possible in front of the abbot! Not surprisingly, this simple-minded pursuit of a principle leads the Master into the realm of the absurd when the heir apparent is abruptly set aside for the slightest fault. Of the many grotesque chapters in RM, this must be counted one of the worst. See Vogüé, CA, 315–319.

When we turn to Benedict, we find with relief that he has completely set aside the dynastic idea for that of election. In doing so, of course, he returns to the mainstream of monastic practice. In fact, election was the general norm for episcopal choice in early Church, so the monks were simply following the Great Church in this matter.

So far so good, but when we examine 64.1-6 more closely things begin to come apart or at least they seem much less clear. The problem comes in assigning precise juridical content to the terms employed to describe the process. For example, does *ordinatio* mean exactly the same thing as the modern word does? See notes 64T, 64.1. What about *eligere?* Does it mean a definitive election, or is the choice of the monks only consultative? Is the local bishop given a true veto power, or is his role only liturgical? J. Lienhard, 1–15, surveys the literature of this controversy.

Undoubtedly the hardest nut to crack is *sanior pars* (64.1), a concept that has exercised scholarly brains for decades. Those of us who are used to majority rule find it hard to conceive that the advice of a small part of the community would be allowed to prevail. This seems to merely push the question back a notch, for one must then ask: who decides which is the *sanior pars?*

Perhaps the most plausible opinion is that of W. Grundmann, 1.237-251, who thinks that Benedict left the matter somewhat vague precisely in order to keep it from hardening into a juridic straitjacket. And in fact some modern Benedictine communities have opted for a "discernment process" that seeks to avoid the choice of the superior by

simple majority rule. Rather, the emphasis is on providing sufficient room for the free activity of the Holy Spirit.

B. The Second Abbatial Directory (RB 64.7-22)

We have seen that the doctrine on the abbot presents a fairly complex picture. On the one hand, Benedict borrowed a great deal from the Master in RB 2, with certain adjustments. And so we might assume that Benedict would distance himself even more from RM 2 in RB 64. That, however, is not the case. In fact, RB 64 represents a certain return to the doctrine of RM 2 on the abbot. How this can be will be apparent to someone who recalls that RB 2 is indeed harsher than RM 2; Benedict seems to have systematically created a sterner, less forgiving abbot figure in RB 2 (see notes and RB 2 Overview). Now, toward the end of his Rule and perhaps after a lifetime of experience (see Borias 18.222-225) he appears to be engaged in a serious reprise of his own teaching on the abbot.

Moreover, Benedict agrees with the Master on some basic aspects of monastic authority. Both teach that the abbot must be accountable, flexible, loving and willing to correct errant monks. But RB 64 adds important insights to this common doctrine, both in terms of form and content. Unlike both RM 2 and RB 2, this chapter is not dialectical; rather, it pursues one basic theme throughout its length, although it does so by means of two lists (64.8-11,16) followed by two developments (12-15; 17-19).

Basically, RM 2 is concerned that the abbot not indulge in favoritism. That is a real danger, since the Master gives the abbot so much power. Indeed, RM 92 seems to represent the culmination of that power, and it is hard to see how one could actually escape the charge of favoritism in that process. The means that the Master provides to combat favoritism is casuistry: that is, he continually lectures the abbot and provides him with model speeches to be given on all occasions (see RM 13–15).

Benedict, on the other hand, zeroes in on rigorism in RB 64. Against the temptation to fanaticism, he insists on charity and moderation in all things for the abbot. This theme runs from the beginning to the end of 64.7-22. And unlike the Master, he does not provide any set formulae for avoiding excessive rigor. Rather, he calls for *discretio*, the "mother of virtues" (64.19) to guide the abbot. Or perhaps it would be better to say that he calls for a discrete person in the abbot, for such a virtue cannot really be learned. It is basically a gift of God and not just a matter of the will. But, as Vogüé, 3.375, notes, although Benedict preaches balance, he does not come down in the middle of the question. Even though there is no total abandonment of the need for discipline, the overall emphasis of RB 64 is certainly on mercy. Therefore, the warning is mostly against abbatial excess in *rigor*.

Besides the factor of lived experience that we mentioned earlier, Benedict probably arrived at a more humane teaching here than he presented in RB 2 because he used different literary sources. In RB 2, of course, he actually tightened up the Master's already somewhat stiff attitude; in RB 64 there are signs of a gentler approach learned from the Bible as well as other earlier monastic masters.

One of the more notable stylistic features of this chapter is the presence of two lists of attributes, the first of which (vv. 8-11) consists of four positive virtues and the second, six negative vices to be avoided (v. 16). These lists, which resemble RB 31.1 on the cellarer, are mainly borrowed from the New Testament letters to Timothy and Titus. In those books, the subject is the ideal Christian bishop, so Benedict is modeling his abbot on the leaders of the Great Church itself.

Another very important source for this chapter is the Suffering Servant of the Prophet Isaiah. In 64.13, Benedict quotes Isaiah 42:3 to the effect that the abbot is not to "break the bent reed." Actually, Isaiah says that the mysterious Servant of Yahweh refused to do that, meaning that he did not use violence against the weak and downcast. In addition, the term *non turbulentus* of 64.16 is probably drawn from Isaiah 42:4. Moreover, Vogüé, 3.373, considers this the keyword of the second list, and the one that the following terms comment on. It should be recalled that Matthew 12:48 quotes Isaiah 42:4 concerning Christ, so we have here a dominical model for the abbot. It is well to keep this suffering, nonviolent Christ in mind when interpreting passages of RB that emphasize the regal Christ (e.g., 63.13, where the abbot is called "Lord and Abbot").

Besides the Bible, St. Augustine is probably the dominant patristic source of RB 64. There are no less than three sayings in this chapter that are either direct quotes from the African Doctor or commonplaces based on his influence. When these three sayings are lined up: "first in assistance rather than precedence"; "hate vices but love the brothers"; "aim more at being loved than feared" it is apparent that all of them teach that love is more appropriate and effective than the use of power in Christian leadership.

Finally, the influence of John Cassian also makes itself felt in this chapter, if only in a subtle fashion. In *conf.* 2.4,4, Cassian coins the memorable saying that "discretion is the mother of virtues." Cassian goes to great lengths in that conference to show how only discretion can keep the other virtues in harmony, without which they tend to become vices. In a sense, Benedict is less radical on this point than Cassian, since he seems to hold that love is the central value (RB 72). Perhaps this just shows that Benedict is less marked by Stoicism than Cassian, but it is also true that Cassian treats discretion as a gift of the Holy Spirit (*conf.* 2.1).

In closing, it should be obvious that the present writer believes that Benedict has greatly improved his abbatial teaching in RB 64 over what he wrote in RB 2. Certainly, it would have been nothing short of disastrous for him to have reproduced RM 92–94, with its wrong-headed method of selecting a successor to the abbot. But Benedict himself, perhaps at a time of youthful zeal and rigor, created an extremely harsh early chapter on the abbot in RB 2.

It is true, of course, that the office of abbot is a demanding one. But there is something fundamentally self-defeating in setting up a leadership role that is so towering that only warnings against damnation can protect it from abuse (RB 2). In RB 64, Benedict approaches the subject from a different angle, namely, that of love. It is true that the subtheme of discretion is very strong in the second treatise, but there is no commandment to observe moderation in love. Ultimately, Benedict defines "merit of life and wisdom of teaching" (64.3) in terms of charity. When charity is the controlling value in monastic leadership, then it is truly Christian, for it is patterned on the model of Jesus.

LXV: DE PRAEPOSITO MONASTERII

[1]Saepius quidem contigit ut per ordinationem praepositi scandala gravia in monasteriis oriantur, [2]dum sint aliqui maligno spiritu superbiae inflati et aestimantes se secundos esse abbates, assumentes sibi tyrannidem, scandala nutriunt et dissensiones in congregationes faciunt, [3]et maxime in illis locis ubi ab eodem sacerdote vel ab eis abbatibus qui abbatem ordinant, ab ipsis etiam et praepositus ordinatur. [4]Quod quam sit absurdum facile advertitur, quia ab ipso initio ordinationis materia ei datur superbiendi, [5]dum ei suggeritur a cogitationibus suis exutum eum esse a potestate abbatis sui, [6]quia ab ipsis es et tu ordinatus a quibus et abbas. [7]Hinc suscitantur invidiae, rixae, detractiones, aemulationes, dissensiones, exordinationes, [8]ut dum contraria sibi abbas praepositusque sentiunt, et ipsorum necesse est sub hanc dissensionem animas periclitari, [9]et hi qui sub ipsis sunt, dum adulantur partibus, eunt in perditionem. [10]Cuius periculi malum illos respicit in capite qui talius inordinationis se fecerunt auctores.

[11]Ideo nos vidimus expedire propter pacis caritatisque custodiam in abbatis pendere arbitrio ordinationem monasterii sui; [12]et si potest fieri per decanos ordinetur, ut ante disposuimus, omnis utilitas monasterii, prout abbas disposuerit, [13]ut, dum pluribus committitur, unus non superbiat. [14]Quod si aut locus expetit aut congregatio petierit rationabiliter cum humilitate et abbas iudicaverit expedire, [15]quemcumque elegerit abbas cum consilio fratrum timentium Deum ordinet ipse sibi

In closing, it should be obvious that the present writer believes that Benedict has greatly improved his abbatial teaching in RB 64 over what he wrote in RB 2. Certainly, it would have been nothing short of disastrous for him to have reproduced RM 92–94, with its wrong-headed method of selecting a successor to the abbot. But Benedict himself, perhaps at a time of youthful zeal and rigor, created an extremely harsh early chapter on the abbot in RB 2.

It is true, of course, that the office of abbot is a demanding one. But there is something fundamentally self-defeating in setting up a leadership role that is so towering that only warnings against damnation can protect it from abuse (RB 2). In RB 64, Benedict approaches the subject from a different angle, namely, that of love. It is true that the subtheme of discretion is very strong in the second treatise, but there is no commandment to observe moderation in love. Ultimately, Benedict defines "merit of life and wisdom of teaching" (64.3) in terms of charity. When charity is the controlling value in monastic leadership, then it is truly Christian, for it is patterned on the model of Jesus.

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praepositum. [16]Qui tamen praepositus illa agat cum reverentia quae ab abbate suo ei iniuncta fuerint, nihil contra abbatis voluntatem aut ordinationem faciens, [17]quia quantum praelatus est ceteris, ita eum oportet sollicitius observare praecepta regulae.

[18]Qui praepositus si repertus fuerit vitiosus aut elatione deceptus superbire, aut contemptor sanctae regulae fuerit comprobatus, admoneatur verbis usque quater; [19]si non emendaverit, adhibeatur ei correptio disciplinae regularis. [20]Quod si neque sic correxerit, tunc deiciatur de ordine praepositurae et alius qui dignus est in loco eius surrogetur. [21]Quod si et postea in congregatione quietus et oboediens non fuerit, etiam de monasterio pellatur. [22]Cogitet tamen abbas se de omnibus iudiciis suis Deo reddere rationem, ne forte invidiae aut zeli flamma urat animam.

RB 65: THE PRIOR OF THE MONASTERY

1. All too often it has happened that the installation of a prior has made grave scandals arise in monasteries. 2. There are some who become puffed up with an evil spirit of pride, thinking themselves second abbots and grasping at autonomous power. They nourish disputes and create quarrels in communities. 3. This is particularly the danger in those places where the prior is installed by the same bishop or abbots who install the abbot. 4. It is easy to see what an absurd arrangement this is, for from the very moment of installation the grounds for pride are present. 5. His thoughts will suggest to him that he has been freed from the abbot's power: 6. "You were installed by the same people who installed him!" 7. From this come envy, squabbles, backbiting, rivalries, dissensions and disorders. 8. When the abbot and prior are at loggerheads, this dispute will certainly be a danger to their own souls. 9. And their subjects, having to please one or the other, likewise go to ruin. 10. The blame for this crisis must be assigned to those who created such disorder in the first place.

11. Therefore, for the sake of preserving peace and charity, we think it best that the ordering of his monastery depend entirely on the abbot's own judgment. 12. If it can be arranged, all the affairs of the monastery should be managed by deans under the abbot's supervision. We have spoken of this previously. 13. For when the management is entrusted to many, no one person will grow proud. 14. But if local conditions demand it or the community appeals for it with good reasons and humility; and if the abbot judges it best, 15. he himself should choose someone with the advice of God-fearing brothers, and make him his prior. 16. But this prior must respectfully do what he is told by his abbot, without acting against the abbot's will and arrangements.

17. For just as he has been placed ahead of others, so must he obey the stipulations of the Rule more carefully than they.

18. If the prior should be found to have serious faults, or if he allows his position to seduce him into pride, or if he is discovered to despise the Holy Rule, he should be admonished up to four times. 19. If he does not improve, the punishment of the sanctions of the Rule must be applied to him. 20. But if he does not change his ways even then, he should be deposed from the office of prior and another who is worthy put in his place. 21. If he is not quiet and obedient in the community thereafter, he should even be driven from the monastery. 22. Let the abbot remember, though, that he must answer to God for all his decisions; then the flames of envy and jealousy will not sear his soul.

RB 65 Notes

T

Prior (praeposito). The term itself went through a fairly confusing evolution in early monastic history. Since it means "placed at the head," it is not surprising that it first was used to designate the superior of the monastery by Basil and Cassian (*inst.* 5.27; *conf.* 18.7). But other early writers use it to refer to the head of a deanery (Jerome, *ep.* 22.35). In the sixth century, most monastic authors (but not the Master) use the term to mean the second in charge to the abbot. In the Middle Ages, the word took on another connotation, i.e., temporal administration. That happened because the word *prior* was being used for the second, as it is today. But even now the superior of a monastery is sometimes called "conventual prior," whereas the second to the cenobitic abbot is called "claustral prior." See Lentini, 596–597. See *Index:* Prior.

Historically speaking, the "deanery system" was standard in the Pachomian communities, which consisted of many communities subdivided into subgroups. Apparently Benedict still preferred this system (RB 21), but grudgingly accepted the "prior system" when it became typical in Italy.

1.

All too often (Saepius quidem). The comparative adverb with *quidem* can have the sense of "too much" (Vogüé, 2.655). Lentini, 597, remarks on the vitriolic tone of this chapter, which he calls quite unlike Benedict. Perhaps, but Benedict shows elsewhere that he can wax wroth on certain topics (see, e.g., 71.6-9).

installatio (ordinatio). The term refers to the whole process of choosing and placing someone in an office (see notes for 64T and 64.1).

it has happened (contigit). Some mss have the present tense *(contingit)* which would be less tied to actual historical events. It is hard to tell if Benedict is referring to his own hard experience or to the happenings in other Italian communities. To judge from his indignant tone, it may well have been his own history that has turned him against priors.

scandal (scandala) has here its basic meaning of a thing or situation that undermines faith, but in the next verse it means something a little different, namely, disputes. See Blaise, s.v. 2 and 4.

2.
pride (superbiae). This vice is often criticized in the RB, but more often the positive virtue of humility is dwelt upon. The term *superbia* only occurs five times (7.2; 21.5; 28.2; 62.2; 65.2) plus three cases of *superbus* (2.28; 4.34; 23.1). On the other hand, *humilis* and its cognates occur dozens of times. St. Bernard, *de grad. hum.*, rewrote the degrees of humility (RB 7) in terms of their opposites, namely, the degrees of pride. See *Index:* Humility, Pride.

disputes (scandala) here seems to have the unusual meaning of quarrels or disputes. See previous verse.

second abbots (secundos . . . abbates). Benedict has two complaints about priors. The first one, which is set forth in vivid and flamboyant language in this verse, is that some priors are power-hungry. The ensuing struggles that result from such an attitude are altogether abhorrent to the orderly, hierarchical mind of St. Benedict.

It could be that Benedict is playing with words here, for "second abbots" is very close to "second to the abbot." In fact, the prior is in a delicate position, for even though he is expected to fill in for the abbot when the latter is absent, he has no power of his own. When the abbot is present, of course, the prior simply plays the role assigned to him by the abbot. In fact, the prior has no clearly defined role in the Rule, and that ambiguity has continued down through the ages. At the present time, priors have very different positions in monasteries, ranging from considerable power and responsibility to none at all. It all depends on how much authority the abbot wishes to delegate. Whatever that might be, the lines of demarcation must be clearly understood by all parties if there is to be peace in the community.

grasping at autonomous power (adsumentes sibi tyrannidem). The term *tyrannidem* does not have the same connotation it has in English, but it does mean that one is not subject to anyone else (Lentini, 598). There are few things Benedict hates more than the usurpation of power

by those who have no right to it. Usually his strictures are couched in the language of "murmuring," for which see *Index.*

disputes . . . quarrels (scandala . . . dissensiones) resulting from the tendency of insubordinate officials to attract followers who tend to form schismatic cliques.

3.

particularly (Et maxime). For Benedict, the very idea of a prior is problematic. How much more, then, where a prior is set up on the same basis as the abbot, perhaps to counterbalance his power or check on him. In no way can the Abbot of Monte Cassino accept such an arrangement.

installed (ordinatur). It is not a question of outside officials simply choosing abbots or priors as they please, but of their power to confirm the choice made by the monks. Benedict no doubt wishes to do away with such a process in the case of the prior; he is completely under the power of the abbot, who alone should have the right to place him in his office. Even in modern communities when the community is allowed to vote for a prior, that vote is normally consultative and subject to abbatial approval. The abbot must have someone he can work with. For *ordinare,* see notes 64T and 64.1.

abbots (abbatibus). Certainly the diocesan bishop was the regular agent for this process, but when he was impeded he may have turned over the role to the neighboring abbots. Or perhaps they were invited to be present as witnesses. It is interesting that they are always mentioned in the plural; thus they form a parallel to the present-day General Chapter or Visitators. See Lentini, 599.

4.

how absurd (quam absurdum). Lentini, 600, notes what an irritated and almost irrational expression this is, but that is true only if one is convinced, as I am not, that Benedict is a highly controlled personality (see note 65.1).

the grounds for pride (materia ei datur superbiendi), literally, the material for being proud is given to him (that is, to the prior).

It is curious that Gregory the Great, *dial.* 2.22, says Benedict appointed both the abbot and prior of Terracina! And we know that the Pope himself did so in several cases (*ep.* 5,6 and 11.48).

5.

freed (exutum) and not just "free," because he was under the power of the abbot until he was installed as prior—such is his confused thinking.

6.

The direct discourse and the suggestive whispering of the demon of pride and ambition make this one of the liveliest verses in the Rule. In fact, RB 65 fairly crackles with emotional electricity. Sad to say, it is also an unbalanced and even embarrassing performance by a person of general good sense.

7.

There are similar lists in 2 Corinthians 12:20 and Galatians 5:20-21.

envy (invidiae). Envy is the desire for what belongs to another; in this case, the prior would be tempted to envy the abbot's power. In 65.22, this term is used for the abbot, but one would suspect that Benedict really means jealousy. The latter term, when used precisely, means that one is afraid of losing that which belongs to oneself.

disorders (exordinationes) is a rare word, not even found in OLD, but one case is cited in Blaise, s.v. It could be the obverse of *ordinatio,* and so "dismissals"; or it could mean "counter-orders" by the prior and abbot (Vogüé, 2.655). I have opted for "disorder" as the opposite of *ordo*.

8.

are at loggerheads (contraria sibi . . . sentiunt). It would be possible to translate this phrase less pungently, but the context seems to require it. If the abbot and prior merely "see things differently," it is hard to see why that would endanger their souls. Of course, if they consistently pursue different policies this will be disastrous to the community in the long run. If they are in open conflict, which seems to be the case here, it is an intolerable situation.

own souls (ipsorum . . . animas) in contrast to those of their "followers," which are treated in the next verse.

Grammatically, v. 8 appears to be a *ut*-clause of result, but then the verbs should be subjunctive. *Dum,* which is one of Benedict's favorite conjunctions, seems to control the subsequent material and thus explain the indicative verbs *sentiunt* and *necesse est*.

9.

having to please one or the other (dum adulantur partibus). Most translators have "if they side with one party or the other," but I agree with Lentini, 601, who thinks that in such a nasty situation, one *has* to take sides. Of course, one should side with the abbot, but even *that* is a side; the sad thing is that all are caught up in factionalism.

10.

in the first place (in capite) seems to be the key to this difficult verse.

The real originators of the internecine war in the monastery in this case are the ecclesiastical authorities who appointed both abbot and prior (Lentini, 601–602). Another possible interpretation would assign blame to the abbot and the prior who are "chiefly" to blame for the factions (Steidle?). A third possibility is that the responsibility lies "on the heads" *(in capite)* of those who started the problem *(RB 1980).*

11.

for the sake of preserving peace and charity (propter pacis caritatisque custodiam). Benedict cannot be accused of pushing a monarchical ideology for its own sake. The cause of peace rates very high on his scale of values. See *Index:* Peace.

we think it is best (nos vidimus expedire). "Best" seems a rather weak statement, given the context of very strong feeling evidenced in this chapter. On the other hand, the unusual use of *nos* means that Benedict is taking clear responsibility for the opinion that follows.

ordering (ordinationem) could also refer to the appointments of the monastery, in this case that of the prior. The term *ordinatio* is used many times in these chapters to mean "installation." See *Index:* Installation.

entirely . . . own are not in the text itself, but seem demanded by the context.

his (sui). Although we today might cringe to call the monastery the abbot's "own," in this case there is a certain logic: the abbot must look to the ordering of his community. It is no one else's responsibility and right to do so.

12.

If it can be done (et si potest fieri). Probably the chief requirement for deaneries would be a sufficient number of monks. The minimum, of course, would be twenty (for two groups of ten), but a much larger number seems needed to make them practicable. Today, only the largest communities have deaneries and most modern monasteries with deans also have a prior; Benedict himself does not preclude that (Lentini, 605).

affairs (utilitas). As in RB 3.12, the term has an unusual meaning here. The basic meaning, of course, is "usefulness," and I have argued elsewhere that this refers to the public welfare of the community. In this case the noun is concrete, not abstract. See *Index:* Useful.

We have spoken of this previously (ut ante disposuimus), namely, in RB 21. I have made this a separate sentence to avoid an overloaded

construction. Deaneries are Benedict's preferred form of monastic government, and even though he must modify it in RB 65, he cannot resist noting that fact.

13.

management is understood here. Grammatically, the subject is *utilitas* from the previous verse, but it would not work as well here for the sense.

The logic here is simple enough: those with a smaller portion of power will be less tempted to pride. Nevertheless, the prior is just as subordinate to the abbot as is the dean, and there is no inherent reason why he should forget his place. It is rare to hear of a conflict between prior and abbot in modern monasteries. It is my conviction that this chapter and its strictures on the prior are based more on a personal trauma of Benedict rather than on a balanced overall view of the topic.

14.

local conditions (locus). It is hard to see why the place itself would demand a prior, but that is the way Schmitz, Vogüé and Rochais translate it. Perhaps the French *lieu* can mean more than just "place"? Manning, 3.173-174, suggests that *locus* here means "city," and refers to a later period when the monks of Monte Cassino fled to Rome (see Overview, B.1).

the community (congregatio). As he established in RB 3, the abbot should be willing to listen to the concerns of all the members. But in that chapter he sets this up as a principle; here in RB 65, one gets the impression that Benedict is backed in a corner and acting reluctantly.

with good reasons (rationabiliter) sometimes seems to have a meaning for Benedict that goes beyond mere reason, but that is an adequate translation here. At any rate, when it is combined with humility (see 61.4), reason is the ideal attitude for one approaching authority. See *Index:* Reason.

15.

he, himself . . . his (ipse sibi). It is important to include all these intensives and reflexives in order to underline Benedict's fierce insistence that the abbot control the choice of his own assistant. For that is what the prior is, the abbot's assistant.

God-fearing brothers (fratrum timentium Deum). In the context of this nervous and irritable chapter, this phrase is probably barbed. It sets up a sharp contrast between those who want a prior as a countervailing force against the abbot, and those who want someone who will assist

the abbot in ruling the abbey according to the will of God. But throughout the Rule, the fear of God is a central virtue that insures that worldly values do not determine how one sees things (see esp. RB 7.10). See *Index:* Fear.

Borias, 18.226-227, thinks that the "God-fearing brothers" in this verse are really the small council (see Overview, B.2).

17.

than they is not expressed in the Latin but is obviously parallel to *ceteris* (others) in the first member. Actually, the author may not finish off the comparison because it is not strictly logical: no one in the monastery can claim that because of a lower rank he may obey less.

In RM 93.51-52, the second is expected to observe the Rule more carefully than before he was designated the abbot's successor. Pachomius, *inst.* 17, tells the *praepositus* he must stick to the superior's orders and also obey the Rule. In RB 62.3-4, the priest is also expected to be more, not less, submissive because of his high office. See Vogüé, 2.657.

18.

serious faults (vitiosus). One hesitates to use the English term "vicious," since it seems to go beyond probabilities implied here. *Vitium* is used so frequently in RB that it seems likely that it has a somewhat weakened sense. One would think that Benedict's extreme suspicion of priors and his demand of a careful process for choosing them would preclude a really poor choice. Nevertheless, as long as we are sinners and free to choose the evil, the downfall of even the most noble person is not unimaginable. Yet, it almost sounds as if Benedict *expects* that the prior will eventually be found to be seriously flawed. See *Index:* Vice.

into pride (superbire) is in fact an infinitive in the Latin, but because it is the only infinitive in the three condition clauses, it is somewhat ungrammatical. The whole clause is not easy to translate; a literal rendering might be: If he is found to be proud because he has been seduced by his high rank.

four times (quater) is twice as much as normal (23.2) for offenders, but priors no doubt deserve the benefit of the doubt. Still, there is something grotesque about a situation where someone with that much responsibility has to be continually warned. Such a lack of response would seem to prove he should not be in his position.

despise the Holy Rule (contemptor sanctae regulae). Although it may seem strange for Benedict to call his own work "the Holy Rule," especially in view of his diffident remarks in RB 73, yet this language

should probably not be understood too narrowly. Probably the author is referring to the whole monastic tradition, which he holds in high regard. See *RB 1980,* 286.

This long verse resembles RB 23.1-3 in its vocabulary and content, and it also recalls 21.5-6. That is not surprising, since both of those passages deal with monastic insubordination. In fact, that is the only real fault that Benedict cannot abide: insubordination (see note 23.1).

19.
punishment of the sanctions provided in the Rule (correptio disciplinae regularis). Vogüé, 2.658, thinks that this is the public admonition arranged for in RB 23.3. In view of the next verses, that seems likely. Unlike some other places in the Rule where he seems to violate his own rules for corrections (see note 2.28), Benedict here hews quite close to the principles stated in RB 23. See *Index:* Discipline, Punishment.

20.
deposed (deiciatur) is probably too nice a word here, but "sacked" might seem crude. Still, the author's mood and most of the OLD, s.v., meanings for *deicere* are very harsh.

21.
driven (pellatur). Benedict seems to forget one of the steps in his penal process, namely, in-house excommunication. To judge from RB 23–30, that is in fact the most important step and one would expect that the ex-prior would have a right to it before expulsion. After all, true expulsion is the last resort in monastic discipline (see RB 28). Again, it seems that feeling is outrunning reason in this chapter.

The stipulation that the deposed prior should return to the ranks without any pretensions applies also to a prior who is removed from that office not out of punishment but rather for ordinary administrative reasons. Moreover, it also applies to ex-abbots, who can do much to validate their past leadership by this means.

22.
keep in mind (cogitet) seems to be a word that Benedict only applies to the abbot (see *Index:* Thought). After directing all his attention at the troublesome prior, the author closes with the admission that the problem may sometimes lie on the side of the abbot. Indeed, many a monk has been appointed to this office without wishing it, and then dealt with as if he were ambitious.

envy and jealousy (invidiae et zeli). As was noted at 65.7, these two passions are not synonymous. It would seem that the abbot would be

more susceptible to the second vice, because he *does* possess power, but probably Benedict is using the terms loosely here. Together, they describe the kind of problems that arise in a power struggle of any kind.

flames (flamma) is a powerful image, but not original with Benedict. Or at least it was current in his day, for the contemporary Council of Carthage (A.D. 536) uses it.

RB 65 Overview

The chapter on the prior is probably the hardest test for an interpreter of the Rule of Benedict. It is not that the grammar and vocabulary are any more difficult than usual, though it is different, see below B.1; nor is the content so confusing, though it is somewhat intricate. What is hard to fathom about this chapter is its tone of voice. From beginning to end, the author seems to be defensive in the extreme, trying to fend off the very idea of a prior and then accepting it with bad grace. What can explain this petulant performance? To judge from those hardy interpreters who have faced up to the problem (most pious commentators have averted their eyes), the attempts at a solution can be divided into the historical and the literary.

A. Historical Approach

Under this rubric one must place the extensive chapter of Vogüé 3.347-392. He does not emphasize the bad temper of the chapter as much as I and some others do, but he still recognizes that it is the product of a troubled situation.

The very term *praepositus* is confusing, because it means "placed first," but the prior is placed second. In fact, terminology for monastic superiors was not fixed firm for a long time. For example, Jerome and Cassian usually mean the chief superior when they use *praepositus,* but eventually another term, *abbas,* became standard for the leader. That left *praepositus* free for another purpose, and by the sixth century it was regularly used to mean the abbot's lieutenant (by e.g., Gregory the Great).

Yet the Rule of the Master uses the term to mean the deans; in RM, the second in command is called *secundus*. Benedict does not follow the Master in this matter, however, for he calls the dean *decanus* and the second *praepositus*. However, the difference between the two Rules on this matter is much more profound than a mere matter of language. In fact, the Master has no prior at all; rather, he has the abbot appoint an heir apparent, which is a very different thing. In RM 93, this system is revealed in its fundamental absurdity when the old abbot fails to die

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on schedule. Then the *secundus* becomes an awkward embarrassment and is inevitably sacked.

It would be wrong, however, to imply that the Master's system was in any way standard. In fact, by the sixth century, priors were the normal thing in most larger communities. So Benedict returns to the mainstream when he makes provision for a prior, that is, a second-in-command to the abbot. Yet to judge from the anguished tone of RB 65, the Abbot of Monte Cassino is by no means happy to do so.

His hesitancy, though, has a different cause than that of the Master. Now the problem is outside interference in the affairs of the community, or more precisely, the leadership of the abbot. The principal complaint is against bishops and abbots who appoint both the abbot and the prior (65.3), creating the impression that the prior is on a par with the abbot. It is not a long step from that problem to the general difficulty of an insubordinate prior, which Benedict also bemoans (65.18-22).

Even at this point, we might hazard the guess that RB 65 is somehow a reaction to RB 64, for the previous chapter is surprisingly quick to invite in the local clergy and faithful to cope with problematic monastic superiors (see notes for 64.3-6). Now, however, outside interference is fiercely resisted, causing one to wonder if the same person really wrote both chapters? This doubt will surface again later in our study (B1).

The impression given by Benedict is that the prior is an inherently troublesome official. He is quite candid in preferring the deanery system (65.12-13), which he did indeed set up at the very beginning of his section on the common life (RB 21). But he admits that some situations call for a prior, and so if the monks insist on a second-in-command, the abbot should allow one. Is Benedict's hatred (let us call it by its right name) of a prior something corroborated by history?

The record is mixed. Beginning with Pachomius and extending throughout monastic history, abbots needed assistance with the task of governing. This was especially so in larger communities or in situations where the monastery was involved in complex economic affairs. Some abbots were gone much of the time on business, so the prior became in effect the local superior. In other cases, the prior was deputed to take care of external business to free the abbot for his "proper" work of guiding the spiritual lives of the monks.

Obviously, things could go wrong. Where priors went beyond their mandate there could be a power struggle. Or where the parameters of the prior's authority were vague, there could be serious trouble. The case of Theodore in the *Life of Pachomius* (SBo 94–95) is a classic one since it shows how delicate the prior's position could be. And this was especially true where the prior was a stronger personality than the abbot (as with Theodore and Horsiesi: SBo 140).

Although Benedict condemns the appointment of the prior and the abbot by the same outside authority, there were in fact situations where Church officials had to step in to do such things. The correspondence of Pope Gregory the Great, for example, shows that at least twice he had to install strong priors to bolster dysfunctional abbots (*ep.* 5.6; 11.48). Since the tradition did not allow abbots to retire, what other graceful solution was there?

As for Benedict himself, it is hard to believe that his view of this question is merely theoretical. Granted, he is in love with order and especially with hierarchical order (see RB 63). But a prior does not disrupt that system as such, since he has no autonomous authority. No, the depth of feeling exhibited in RB 65 could hardly have arisen from anything else than personal experience. And to judge from the result, that experience left an extremely bitter taste in the mouth of Benedict.

B. Literary Approaches

1. Eugene Manning

Although Manning usually limits his comments on RB to a few words, his remarks on the prior, 3.173-176, are much more extensive. The French Trappist regularly lists the *hapax legoumena* (words used only once), and in RB 65 he finds a real treasure trove: thirty-two words and terms are found only here in RB. According to the theory, the greater the number of *hapax legoumena,* the less likely that a chapter is written by the same author as the one who wrote the rest of the document.

But there are other factors as well that suggest to Manning that RB 65 on the prior is a later addition to the Rule. He argues, for example, that the chapter should logically come before RB 21, since the prior is higher on the hierarchical ladder than the deans. That, of course, does not prove that Benedict himself did not add the material on the prior at a later date when he saw the need.

But Manning finds it hard to believe that the same person who wrote the Rule wrote RB 65. He thinks that the normally flexible and imperturbable Benedict would hardly allow himself to fly into such a rage, at least in print! While it is certainly curious for an author to reveal so clearly his inner turmoil in writing, and especially in a document of this type, I am not convinced that Benedict is nearly so unflappable as Manning (and many other commentators) think. If so, what are we to make of RB 46.1-4 and 71.6-9, which are not exactly examples of sweet temper? In fact, there are any number of extremely tough passages in the Rule that show that Benedict had a hard-bitten streak in him that could verge on fanaticism. See Kardong, 3.50-55.

At any rate, Manning has a suggestion about the circumstances that may have actually produced RB 65. He points out that RB 65.14 makes the provision that a prior may be appointed if "the city *(locus)* requires it." This is a very unusual meaning for *locus* (see Blaise, s.v. 5) to be sure, but it fits Manning's theory: he believes that when the monks of Monte Cassino fled to Rome (in A.D. 579), they would have found themselves surrounded by other communities with priors. Hence they pressured the abbot, that is, the successor of Benedict, to appoint a prior and he did so—with the utmost reluctance.

The charm of this theory is that saves Benedict from responsibility for one of the worst chapters in monastic literature. The problem, however, is that it is based on the slender thread of a very rare meaning of one word. Moreover, in my opinion, a commentator must make a decision concerning the integrity of a document. Do I or do I not believe that Benedict wrote the whole Rule? For most commentators, including the present writer, the answer is yes. But not for E. Manning. In fact, much of his research with F. Masai suggests that the Rule was an amalgam of materials from different writers over several generations. See Vogüé, 27.7-42; 271-309.

2. André Borias

Like Manning, Borias thinks that the puzzle of RB 65 can be answered by redaction criticism. Unlike Manning, however, he does not go outside the text itself to find his answer. That is to say, he does not posit a later author nor a later situation. Rather, he thinks he finds sufficient clues within the RB itself to be able to reconstruct the growth of the document.

For Borias, 18.225-227, the main clue lies in RB 3, a chapter that is clearly different from its surroundings in the first part of the Rule. That difference lies mostly in the fact that authority is presented rather collegially in the chapter on the council (see RB 3 Overview). But there is more: RB 3 contains language very reminiscent of the last chapters of the Rule, making Borias think that it was in fact written, or perhaps rewritten, later in Benedict's career.

Now one of the verses of RB 3 is very reminiscent of RB 65: both 3.11 and 65.22 use the same language to warn the abbot to fear the judgment. Immediately following that characteristic statement, RB 3 appends two verses on consulting the seniors for minor business. In Borias' opinion, that provision was added precisely because of the problem with the prior in RB 65. In 65.15, of course, the abbot is told to consult "God-fearing brothers" about the choice of the prior. Now that consultation is regularized and made a permanent part of the monastic governing structure.

According to Borias, Benedict does not want to relive the experience that we see hinted at in RB 65. He does not want the abbot, whether it be himself or another, to find himself forced into a move by monastic "mob action." So he creates a body of advisors who can keep him apprised of the feeling of the community and also make suggestions about likely candidates for offices such as prior.

Borias also thinks that RB 21 sheds some light on RB 65. He does not doubt that the chapter on the deans is older and more basic to Benedict's mentality. After all, RB 65.12 makes that point plainly enough. But eventually the prior replaced the deans in Benedict's governmental structure. When that happened, the legislator added the revealing RB 65, but he also felt it necessary to add an appendix to RB 21. That is the origin of RB 21.7: "We prescribe the same course of action in regard to the prior." Since the Rule up to that point has made no mention of a prior, the verse as it stands makes little sense apart from the existence of RB 65, a later creation.

It seems to me that Borias' theory sheds light on the history of Benedict's own redactional process in general and on RB 65, 3 and 21 in particular. The theory does not at all rule out Vogüé's research on the historical trajectory of the office of the prior. It does seem, though, that the historical data are so varied that some kind of literary theory must be postulated to make sense of this question in the Rule.

LXVI: DE OSTIARIIS MONASTERII

[1]Ad portam monasterii ponatur senex sapiens, qui sciat accipere responsum et reddere, et cuius maturitas eum non sinat vagari. [2]Qui portarius cellam debebit habere iuxta portam, ut venientes semper praesentem inveniant a quo responsum accipiant. [3]Et mox ut aliquis pulsaverit aut pauper clamaverit, Deo gratias respondeat aut Benedic, [4]et cum omni mansuetudine timoris Dei reddat responsum festinanter cum fervore caritatis. [5]Qui portarius si indiget solacio iuniorem fratrem accipiat.

[6]Monasterium autem, si possit fieri, ita debet constitui ut omnia necessaria, id est aqua, molendinum, hortum, vel artes diversas intra monasterium exerceantur, [7]ut non sit necessitas monachis vagandi foris, quia omnino non expedit animabus eorum.

[8]Hanc autem regulam saepius volumus in congregatione legi, ne quis fratrum se de ignorantia excuset.

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RB 66: THE PORTERS OF THE MONASTERY

1. A wise old monk should be stationed at the gate of the monastery. He should know how to listen to people and also how to speak to them; his age should prevent him from wandering about. 2. The porter will need to have quarters near the gate so that those who arrive will always find him present to answer their call. 3. As soon as anyone knocks or a poor person cries out, he should respond "Thanks be to God!" or "Bless me!" 4. Filled with the gentleness of the fear of God, he must quickly respond in the warmth of charity. 5. If the porter needs help, he should be given a younger brother to assist him.

6. If possible, the monastery should be built so that all necessities such as water, mill and garden are contained within the walls so they can practice the various crafts there. 7. That way it will not be necessary for the monks to venture outside, for that is certainly not beneficial to their souls.

8. We want this Rule read rather often in the community so no brother can excuse himself because of ignorance.

RB 66 Notes

T

porters (ostiariis). The title is plural, but the chapter speaks of only one gatekeeper. Benedict probably took his title from RM 95, which does indeed have two porters. The Master believes in having two of everything (deans, RM 11; guestmasters, RM 79) in case one should need to leave the post. It is a symptom of the Master's paranoia, a characteristic not shared by Benedict.

1.

wise (sapiens). The porter needs to be "wise" since he will be dealing with all sorts of people. Given Benedict's ideal of the monastery as a closed system with the gate as the meeting point between the cloister and the world (66.6-7), the porter becomes the mediator between the two spheres. Hence the need for special discretion and knowledge of people. It is instructive that most of the usages of *sapiens* in RB pertain to human relations. See *Index:* Wisdom.

how to listen to people and also how to speak (accipere responsum et reddere), literally, "how to receive and give an answer." It is possible to understand *responsum* as a message, but the rest of the chapter indicates that the porter is not merely a functionary but someone who has a gift for dealing humanely with visitors. Since the porter is the only monk that many visitors meet at the monastery, it is very important

that he treat them in a Christ-like manner (see RB 53). I have translated *senes* as (wise old) "monk" because, given the requirements Benedict has for the porter, it does not seem possible that anyone but a member of the community could adequately fulfill the post. See *Index:* Speech.

should prevent him from wandering about (eum non sinat vacari) is evidently addressed to the abbot and not the porter. Benedict is indicating what kind of person should be appointed to this important office. Moreover, it makes a bad impression to find no one on hand to answer the door or telephone of a monastery. RM 95.1-13 solves this problem by having two porters. When one is away at meals or choir or some other duty, the other is always on duty.

The best Latin text has *vacari* (to be free) but the meaning demands *vagare* (to roam about; see Vogüé, 1.396). Besides being gently humorous, this second reason for "maturity" is added to that of wisdom, which normally demands a certain experience of life.

2.

porter (portarius). Benedict now shifts terminology from his original term in the title *(ostiarius)*. The title "porter" is traditional in many monasteries, although it means something else in secular culture. This is due to the confusion between *porta* (gate) and *portare* (to carry). In modern monasteries, the porter functions as a receptionist.

quarters (cella) could refer to a freestanding hut or a room in a building. If the gate of the monastery was part of an encircling wall, then the porter would need a hut, but if the gate was simply the door of a building, no separate habitation would be necessary. See *Index:* Cell.

always . . . present (semper praesentem). This may seem like an unreasonable demand, but it is important to have someone on hand to deal with all who arrive. That is especially true of wayfarers in need of immediate hospitality (see comments on *hospites* and *peregrini* in RB 53.1,2 and 15). In ancient times, the gates of a monastery would be bolted at night, so someone arriving would need to call for special help from the porter. As in 66.1, I hesitate to interpret *responsum* as "message."

3.

As soon as a poor person cries out (pauper clamaverit) is a vivid picture of what actually went on at the gates of an ancient monastery. It is not just a zone for transacting business, but rather of succoring the poor and destitute. Their need drives them to cry out and not just politely knock. Just because the callers are powerless does not mean that they may be left to wait as if in some overtaxed welfare bureau. Rather, one

hastens to respond to the Christ who is surely present in the poor (see 53.1). See *Index:* Poor.

"Thanks be to God!" and "Bless me!" (Deo gratias . . . Benedic). Both of these responses express the faith of the porter that in the guest he is encountering Christ. Because the idea of asking a blessing from a guest has always been hard to comprehend, scribes sometimes changed *benedic* to *benedicet* (he will bless). But in 53.14 (see note), Benedict clearly shows that he regards the guest as a gift of God. See *Index:* Bless.

4.

This is one of those passages where Benedict, no doubt driven by strong feeling, attempts to convey importance and intensity by means of multiple modifiers (see also Prol 49). This strains the English rendition to the breaking point if it is not to look like a purple patch.

filled with (omni), literally, the "whole" gentleness of the fear of God.

gentleness (mansuetudine) appears here for the first time in RB, but it will come up again in 68.2. The term is surprising, but the thought is clear enough: the poor must be treated gently because they are specially loved by God. Since they have no natural prestige and are often devoid of polish and manners, the temptation is to handle them roughly.

the fear of God (timoris Dei) is one of Benedict's key spiritual ideas. The theme is presented in full form in RB 53.15, where the author states wryly that the rich exercise *terror* on their own, but the poor have only Christ to protect them. That is why the Benedictine guest-director must be a God-fearer (53.21) more than anything else. See *Index:* Fear.

quickly (festinanter) repeats the urgency of the previous verse (as soon as). Probably Benedict had seen enough abuse of the poor by monastic porters to convince him that this point must be driven home hard. In 22.6 and 43.1 the monks are urged to hurry *(festinare)* to the Divine Office. Since the pilgrim and stranger are Christ-bearers, it is also a sacred act for the porter to hurry to care for them. Even though the porter is supposed to be a senior citizen who presumably cannot spring nimbly to the gate, at least a quick response can be given. See Kardong, 6.164; see *Index:* Alacrity.

in the warmth of charity (fervore caritatis). While it might seem to stretch our credulity to demand that the porter respond in love to all those who come, it is not unusual to find the idea in Benedict's Rule. After all, he says that monks are to be characterized by the good zeal that expresses itself in "the most fervent love" (see note 72.3). This is the absolute antithesis of the hard-boiled attitude of those gatekeepers whose whole purpose seems to be to keep people out. In monasteries

where public pressure is a fact of life and a burden, care must be taken that porters do not develop adversarial attitudes toward the outside world. See *Index:* Love.

respond (reddat responsum). For the third time this word is used, making it the leitmotif of RB 66. Vogüé, 2.660, points out that the corresponding theme of RM 95 is "Close the door"! Thus RB 66, at least up to this point, is much more positive in tone. It should also be noted that even though RB 6 seems to demand almost total silence of the monks, here one of them is expected to be gifted in speech. Evidently the prohibition was not taken strictly (see RB 6 Overview); in RB 66, proper speech is quite as important as silence. Borias, 18.229-230, sees this as an example of how Benedict's perspective gained depth over the years. See *Index:* Speech.

5.

needs help (indiget solacio). Several times (53.18,20; see 31.17 and 35.3-4; see notes) Benedict enunciates the principle that those who exercise offices in the monastery must have sufficient assistance to carry out their work. See *Index:* Help.

to assist him is merely implied in the Latin.

6.

Vogüé, 2.660-661, shows that this passage on the self-contained nature of the monastery is based on two models: RM 95.17-21 and *hist. mon.* 17. Apparently, though, Benedict or a later scribe has added the words *vel artes diversas intra monasterium exerceantur*. Unfortunately, this creates a grammatical anacolouthon which cannot be resolved except by adding words that are not in the original: "are contained within the walls." Still, the message is clear enough that Benedict does not want the monks roaming about the countryside. Practically speaking, however, the fields of the monastery could hardly be contained within the walls. By the Middle Ages, the wealthier monasteries had lands spread over a wide territory and monks sometimes lived on far-flung granges.

To move from the discussion of the gatekeeper to the enclosure itself has a certain logic. There is no point maintaining a careful watch at the gate unless one wishes to maintain a protective membrane between cloister and world.

Böckmann, 12.131-145, points out that RB 66 has much in common with RB 53. Obviously, the topics of hospitality and the porter are closely connected, but the structures of the two chapters are also similar. Just as the chapter on hospitality begins on a note of openness

and enthusiasm (RB 53.1-15), so RB 66.1-5 is essentially positive. The second half of RB 53, though, is more reserved and finally ends by prohibiting all monks save the guestmaster from speaking to the guests (53.23-24). Likewise, RB 66.6-7 describes the monastery as a closed system, with little openness to the outside world.

While agreeing with Böckmann's insightful comparison, I would interject one additional point. We saw in RB 53.1-15 that the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* was a major influence on Benedict; this anchoritic text reflects the eremitic freedom to serve guests before all else (see RB 53 Overview, A). Here in RB 66, however, it seems that the same text is influential throughout both the first and second parts. That is, *hist. mon.* is alluded to in both the positive part (1-5) and the negative part (6-7). This may weaken the case for seeing part one as anchoritic and part two as cenobitic; or it may even undermine the case for seeing part one as positive and part two as negative.

8.

Many scholars such as Lentini, 612–613, think that this was the concluding verse of an earlier version of RB. After all, the chapter on the porter is the final one of RM (95) and so Benedict's parallel chapter would match. Moreover, the injunction to frequent reading of the Rule is a typical one for ending a prescriptive document such as this one.

The Master is very insistent that the Rule be publicly read every day at meals (24.15) and uses that as the reason why guests should not be present. The same daily requirement is seen in *reg. iv patr.* 3.31, but Augustine, *reg. serv.* 8.2, only asks for a weekly reading. In modern monasteries the Rule is generally read in public every day—usually at table—in small pericopes so that the whole is gone through about three times a year.

this Rule (Hanc regulam) could conceivably refer to the regulation about not going outside the enclosure (Butler), but why should that point be "read rather often"? If this really was the original ending before chapters 67–72 were added, then it would be all the more likely that "this Rule" would refer to the entire document. The phenomenon of successive redactional layers is not unusual in a text which is obviously based on lived experience. On this point, see Borias, 5.38-55.

Borias, 10.270-271, makes the additional point that 66.6-7 seems to be an inclusion with 66.1: both of them contain the words *monasterium* and *vagari* and both of them are critical of monks who wander about. If this is a true inclusion, the chapter probably ended at v. 7, v. 8 being a later addition.

excuse himself (se . . . excuset) that is, for doing things not permitted by the Rule. This verse witnesses to the importance of public reading in an age when books were scarce and many were illiterate. In a sense, the public reading of the Rule resembles the public reading of the covenant to the Israelites in Joshua 24, for by our very listening we renew our pledge to follow the directives of the text.

LXVII: DE FRATRIBUS IN VIAM DIRECTIS

[1]Dirigendi fratres in via omnium fratrum vel abbatis se orationi commendent, [2]et semper ad orationem ultimam operis Dei commemoratio omnium absentum fiat. [3]Revertentes autem de via fratres ipso die quo redeunt per omnes canonicas horas, dum expletur opus Dei, prostrati solo oratorii [4]ab omnibus petant orationem propter excessos, ne qui forte surripuerint in via visus aut auditus malae rei aut otiosi sermonis. [5]Nec praesumat quisquam referre alio quaecumque foris monasterium viderit aut audierit, quia plurima destructio est.

[6]Quod si quis praesumpserit, vindictae regulari subiaceat. [7]Similiter et qui praesumpserit claustra monasterii egredi vel quocumque ire vel quippiam quamvis parvum sine iussione abbatis facere.

RB 67: BROTHERS WHO ARE SENT ON A JOURNEY

1. Brothers who are about to set out on a journey should commend themselves to the prayers of all the brethren and the abbot. 2. A remembrance of all the absent members must always be made at the final prayer of the Divine Office. 3. But when the brothers come back from a journey, they should return that very day for all the canonical Hours. And while the Work of God is coming to an end, they should prostrate on the floor of the chapel. 4. They must ask all to pray for them on account of their faults, for they may have been surprised by the sight of wicked things or the sound of harmful words. 5. And no one should presume to tell anyone else what he has seen or heard outside the monastery, for that causes great harm.

6. If anyone should presume to do so, let him undergo the discipline of the Rule. 7. The same holds true for anyone who presumes to leave the enclosure of the monastery or go anywhere or do anything—even the smallest thing—without the abbot's order.

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RB 67 Notes

T

sent (directis). The verb *dirigere* means to set on a straight line; hence the abbot sets the monk on the "line of a journey" *(in viam).*

The blessing of monks departing and returning from journeys is described in RM 66, but that chapter does not go on to condemn the practice of speaking about what one has seen while traveling. That, however, does not mean that the Master has a more benign attitude than Benedict toward the world; in fact, the Master believes that the world is in the control of the devil. See Kardong, 30.184-204; Böckmann, 5.161-176; 12.131-144.

1.

about to set out (dirigendi). Now the verb *dirigere* is used reflexively: to set oneself or one's steps on a course. In the title, the monk is sent; now he sets out. Furthermore, the journey is now *in via* and not *in viam*. It is also possible to translate *dirigendi* as passive and/or necessary: "who must be sent." Then the emphasis would be on the enclosed nature of the monastery and the monk as described in the last chapter.

the prayers (orationi). Presumably this happened at the Divine Office, which is explicitly mentioned in the next verse. Any journey has its characteristic dangers, but in ancient times the perils of traveling were far worse than today. The rest of the chapter will make it abundantly clear that Benedict considered the world a dangerous place for the monk, although not so much so as to prohibit all travel. See Kardong, 30.188-191.

brothers . . . brothers (fratres . . . fratrum). Although the use of the same word in a single sentence is inelegant, it nevertheless has the effect of emphasizing a point. Here the familial element is paramount: one does not depart from the bosom of the family without bidding goodbye to the brethren and being blessed by them. In the name of convenience, some of the traditional Benedictine rituals of departure and arrival have recently been abandoned in some communities. An example would be the private blessing given by the abbot to the departing monk. The danger is for the common life to descend to the level of the boarding house, where one comes and goes without notice. See *Index:* Brother.

The plural number of *fratres* may indicate that the monks only traveled in pairs and never alone. That is the explicit regulation of several earlier Rules: Pachomius, *pr.* 56; Ps. Mac., *reg.* 22; Basil, *reg. fus.* 39; *ordo mon.* 8. Lentini, 615, thinks that RB 51 may permit the monk to make

one-day journeys alone. Apparently the night-lodging was the problematic aspect of journeying for monks.

2.

remembrance (commemoratio). Apparently there was a specific mention of the absent members in a manner something like the present prayer of the faithful. Or perhaps it was simply a generic prayer for the absent ones, such as has always been part of the Divine Office.

absent members (absentum). In RB 50.4 those who cannot attend the Divine Office are told to pray it wherever they are. The Master (RM 57) spends a good deal of time creating a detailed casuistry on exactly how the Office is to be prayed "on the road." The important thing is that the bond of prayer be maintained between those at home and those traveling. Further, virtually every community has members living and working outside the motherhouse. If there is no bond of faithful prayer for one another, what reality is there to their community? A name in an Ordo or a spot reserved in the community cemetery are not enough to bind us together in love.

3.

Verses 3 and 4 form one long periodic sentence in the Latin. I have trisected it for the comfort of public readers, but what one gains in convenience comes at a certain cost in precision.

when . . . come back (revertentes). Strictly speaking, "when they have returned." Although Latin is usually far more particular about the precise use of participles than is English, Benedict is not particularly fastidious in this regard.

that very day (ipso die). Because I have cut off the following clause, this adverb may now give the wrong impression. Certainly Benedict is not making a special point to tell the returning monks to immediately resume their place in choir. That was taken for granted. Rather, they make their special prayers on the same day they return.

prostrate (prostrati). RB 44.1-7 has the excommunicated also prostrate at the end of the Office, but they are doing penance. Those returning from the journey are not, but still the next verse indicates that there was always suspicion that they had not escaped unscathed from the dangers of the world. See *Index:* Prostrate.

4.

for they may have been surprised (ne qui forte surripuerint). The grammatical subject of this verb is *visus aut auditus,* so the literal meaning is that seeing and hearing have snatched the monk by surprise. The

grammar is not easy, but the idea is vivid. Benedict uses the same figure in 39.7 and 57.7. There is a certain delicacy to this verse, since it does not require the monk to confess any wrongdoing on the journey. It is simply assumed that journeys are difficult, so everyone who returns from one gets a special blessing. Experience shows that only a strong and healthy monastic mentality can survive extensive traveling without disruption. Under the best conditions, routine is upset and a careful regimen of life is very hard to maintain on a journey. On the other hand, it may be good hygiene (both physical and mental) to break out of routine once in a while.

sight of wicked things or the sound of harmful words (visus aut auditus malae rei aut otiosi sermonis). In the Latin, the objects are not attached to separate subjects, but that seems to make better sense. If I have it right, there is a chiasmic structure here: ABA'B'.

harmful words (otiosi sermonis), that is, harmful to the whole community and not just the individual as in RB 6.

Lentini, 616, prefers to take *qui* (faults) as the subject of the dependent clause, but to do so he has to consider *ne forte . . . in via* as parenthetical. He also insists that the monk not be forgiven only the hearing of harmful words, but also the speaking thereof. He agrees with me that the *ne forte* clause is essentially conditional and not a negative purpose clause.

5.

presume (praesumat). This term, which is frequent in Benedict's vocabulary, usually refers to a usurpation of power by one of the monks. That does not seem to be the case here, but there is the sense of indignation that the word always seems to connote. See *Index:* Presumption.

The prohibition against reporting on outside experience is not original with Benedict. Pachomius, *pr.* 57,86, strictly forbade the same thing, and so do *reg. Tarn.* 2, and *verb. sen.* 5.15,59.

Other monastic authors also worry about worldly influences: *vit. patr. Jur.* 50; Augustine, *reg. serv.* 4.2-11.

Schmitz, 155, adds the words "sans discernement" to this verse, probably under the influence of Delatte. Lentini, 617, complains that such additions are unwarranted, but then he turns around and admits that Benedict would not want to exclude "edifying" news from the outside world. He is right of course that monks who travel should report on what would be of benefit to the community. But the text is quite plain in forbidding all reports of outside events and one is still left with the problem of knowing what to do with this prohibition. At least two points might be made here:

First, to be afraid of the world is to confess oneself spiritually weak. Perhaps Benedict is being realistic in admitting that his monks can be easily disturbed by the goings-on of the world, but we should recognize that a spiritually mature person can look on almost anything and see God's hand in it. One recalls the story of a meeting of bishops in Antioch where a beautiful actress chose to ride through their midst. All of the bishops were horrified at the scandal—except one. He marveled at her beauty and praised God for it (Ward, 2.57-75).

Second, there is no intrinsic value in being ignorant of the world. Indeed, one of the truly wonderful aspects of modern life is that, thanks to electronic communications, we can now know what is going on all over the globe within hours (or seconds) of its occurrence. The question is what to do with all this information. We can approach it in the spirit of a voyeur who seeks entertainment; or we can take a more responsible attitude toward it and ask what we can do to make things better. Probably the most important thing a monk can do with the daily news is to pray about it. See Kardong, 3.180–184.

6.

presume to do so (praesumerit) that is, to regale the community with what one has seen and heard on the journey.

discipline (vindictae). Benedict also uses other terms such as *disciplina* and *correptio* for this concept. It is almost always vague and hard to pin down. See *Index:* Discipline.

7.

even the smallest thing (quamvis parvum). Having mentioned the discipline of the Rule, Benedict erupts in a sudden squall of indignation over those who go out of the cloister without permission. This leads him to add the astonishing denunciation of those who do the slightest thing without the abbot's permission. One can explain this outburst by saying that the writer probably means that anything done *against* the abbot's orders is reprehensible. That is different than a prohibition against things done without permission, which is what most translators end up with. But *jussio* is an order, not a permission.

Or one can adopt the solution of Lentini, 619, who pleads that Benedict must be referring to unauthorized deeds done outside the monastery. Otherwise, the verse would show Benedict in a rather bad light. Notwithstanding these qualifications, Benedict is quite capable of rather overwrought pronunciamentoes when he becomes agitated over an issue (see RB 46.1-4; 65 entire; 71.6-9). A more optimistic view of this verse is given by Holzherr, 314–315, who thinks that Benedict

avoids the need for elaborate casuistry by means of a generalized prohibition. Finally, this is not the only time Benedict formulates an all-encompassing ethic of obedience: see also, 44.6; 49.10; 57.1-2.

enclosure (claustra). Although this is the only place in RB where *claustrum* shows up, it was a technical word in early monasticism. The term had a physical reference in many places where the monastery compound was surrounded by a wall that was penetrated by a single gate (see RB 66). The enclosed village model was and is typical of the East, but in the West the monastic enclosure soon took a different form. Here the buildings themselves were grouped into a quad enclosing an inner court (see Horn and Born, 1.245). Of course, the concept of monastic enclosure does not require explicit physical expression. See Leclercq, 3.1991-1992.

LXVIII: SI FRATRI IMPOSSIBILIA INIUNGANTUR

[1]Si cui fratri aliqua forte gravia aut impossibilia iniunguntur, suscipiat quidem iubentis imperium cum omni mansuetudine et oboedientia. [2]Quod si omnino virium suarum mensuram viderit pondus oneris excedere, impossibilitatis suae causas ei qui sibi praeest patienter et opportune suggerat, [3]non superbiendo aut resistendo vel contradicendo. [4]Quod si post suggestionem suam in sua sententia prioris imperium perduraverit, sciat iunior ita sibi expedire, [5]et ex caritate, confidens de adiutorio Dei, oboediat.

RB 68: IF A BROTHER IS TOLD TO DO IMPOSSIBLE TASKS

1. If it should happen that some heavy or impossible tasks are given to a brother, he should accept the order of the superior with all gentleness and obedience. 2. But if he sees that the weight of the task altogether exceeds his strength, he should patiently point out to the superior why he cannot do it. He should do so at the proper time, 3. and without pride, obstinacy or refusal. 4. If, after his suggestion, the superior does not change his mind or his order, the junior monk should realize it is in his best interest. 5. Then, confident in the help of God, he must lovingly obey.

RB 68 Notes

T

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chapter, and it is a major difference between Benedict and John Cassian. In *inst.* 4.15, the latter extols monks who try mightily to carry out impossible tasks, never questioning their feasibility. According to the Cassian, it was customary in Egypt to assign monks absurd and impossible tasks in order to break their self-will. In this, the desert monks were something like the Zen masters who assign a disciple a *koan* designed to thwart reasoning and therefore humble the intellect. For Benedict, the question seems different. He takes up the point of view of the subject who has received an obedience that seems quite impossible.

It is possible to consider RB 68 as one of those appendices added by Benedict to his Rule by way of rounding off previous teachings that now appear too rigid to the mature legislator (Holzherr, 315–316). The instant obedience of RB 5 is now complemented by the possibility of some discussion of difficult or problematic orders. Yet it would not be accurate to portray RB 68 as in any way contradicting RB 5, for Benedict never permits the monk to have the last word (see vv. 4-5). Still, compared to the previous tradition, Benedict seems readier to take into account the inmost feelings of the monk and to allow them expression.

Cassian represents what might be called the school of individual, ascetical obedience in which impossible commands serve to thwart the human ego (*inst.* 4.10,24-26). The latter is seen as an obstacle to the will of God. The Master follows Cassian on this path, extolling absolute obedience as the martyrdom of the monk (7.55) and the abbot as executioner. He too looks on the human will as essentially a problem to be eradicated (90.27-29,38). In RB 68, Benedict takes a different path, following Basilian texts that admit the usefulness of some dialogue in questions of hard obedience (Basil, *reg.* 69 and 82; Ps.-Basil, *admon.* 6). See Böckmann, 11. 5-6.

1.

Steidle notes this is a matter of the monk's *subjective* perception, and not of the objective reality of the situation. In taking the monk's opinion into account, Benedict is revising his earlier view (RB 5.12) that the cenobite lives according to the judgment of another. Salzburg, 233, incorporates this interpretation into the translation itself: "If something is commanded a brother which is too difficult or impossible for him."

If it should happen (Si . . . forte). The presence of *forte* in this conditional clause indicates that the thing has not been planned. That is, authority has not set out to test the monk with an impossible task. Sometimes one will be asked to do hard things (Prol 46-48) but these are seen as an unavoidable necessity and not part of a plan to break the will. Indeed, Benedict cautions against overburdening people in their work (35.13; 38.10; 53.18-20). See Böckmann, 11.12; Kardong, 13.194.

accept (suscipiat) is a loaded word in the RB, featuring prominently in the profession ceremony where the monk begs God to "accept" him (58.21). Since he has been accepted, he should therefore accept in obedience what is asked of him in response to divine grace. See *Index:* Accept. As is pointed out in *RB 1980,* 291, *suscipere* can also mean "undertake." One should not only accept the order but try to carry it out before calling it into question. At any rate, the first response should be positive, for an obedient heart assumes that authority would not ask what is useless or harmful. In Benedict's sources, only Ps.-Basil, *admon.* 6 has *suscipiat* (Vogüé, 2.664).

all gentleness and obedience (omni mansuetudine et obedientia). The first term, which also occurs in 66.4, would indicate a docile acceptance of the command, but the second term seems to point to an attempt at practical implementation.

superior (jubentis) seems to be Benedict's version of Basil's term (*reg.* 69) for the superior: *Is qui praeest,* which will appear in the next verse. This is a remnant of the earliest period in monastic terminology when the title for the superior had not yet crystallized.

2.

he sees (viderit) is again the subjective element. As such it is equivalent to "If it seems," but it could also imply that one has attempted the task and found it overwhelming.

weight of the task (pondus oneris) is pleonastic: the words mean roughly the same thing.

altogether (omnino). The monk is not encouraged to immediately conclude that every task is too much for him. There are people whose cautious temperament tends to total up beforehand all the things that could go wrong with a project. Hence they are crushed by the prospect. Such people may be helped by monastic obedience to trust in the vision of another and so to learn how much they can do if they just take one day at a time. This does not mean, however, that everyone is capable of any task under the grace of obedience. Finally, there are psychological factors that can and do cripple capable people and render them unable to confront the least challenge.

beyond his strength (virium suarum mensuram . . . excedere), literally, the measure of his powers. This is another pleonasm, which Benedict has created by adding to the simpler diction of Ps.-Basil, *admon.* 6. Implied here, of course, is the real possibility that a command might be impossible to carry out, at least for a given person in a given case.

patiently (patienter) is never a throwaway word in the Rule of Benedict. The word is sometimes directly connected to the necessity of carrying the cross with Christ (Prol 50; 7.35) and it is considered a key element of monastic formation (58.3,11). Etymologically, *patior* (to bear) is an appropriate counterpart to the image of a burden *(pondus oneris);* here, though, the monk thinks the weight is crushing him. Hence he is permitted to ask for relief. See *Index:* Patience.

Böckmann, 11.7, notes the repetition of the prefix *ex* in vv. 2-3: *excedere, expedire, ex caritate*. The impossible may set the person free.

3.

at the proper time (oportune). Grammatically, this adverb is parallel to "patiently." I have separated it for stylistic reasons, joining it to the following gerunds. The advice that Benedict gives here is useful from the standpoint of both the superior and the distressed monk. On the one hand, except for an emergency, the superior should not be importuned at inconvenient times. On the other hand, if the monk wishes his plea to be heard with sympathy, he should present it at a favorable time.

with pride, obstinacy or refusal (non superbiendo aut resistendo vel contradicendo). This tremendous trio of gerunds is one of the most rhetorical passages in all of RB. The repetition of the *endo* form gives it the sonority of a big bell, tolling on and on. In itself, it is majestic and beautiful, but one must remember that Benedict is warning *against* this kind of steamroller approach to problems. It is not an obedient thing to overwhelm the superior by force of personality, persistence or in any other way.

pride (superbiendo). Although Benedict's chapter on humility (RB 7) could be described as the spiritual center of his Rule, he does not often mention the opposite vice, namely, pride. Perhaps it is something so antithetical to the monastic ideal that it pains him to speak of it. Pride is essentially resentful of all authority, since to submit is to admit dependency. See *Index:* Pride.

obstinacy (resistendo). The obstinate person is not resentful of authority as such, but has a need for security. This need, especially in its exaggerated forms, makes it very hard for the person to accept change. And so the natural reaction is to oppose all change. Such persons are rock-solid in their commitments, but become a problem in situations where some flexibility is called for.

refusal (contradicendo) is not quite the same as the previous two qualities. Perhaps pride and stubbornness have coalesced to make a truly refractory person, whose first instinct is to say no. This is very

close to the contumacy Benedict condemns in 23.1; 62.11 and 71.9. For this verse, see Kardong, 13.195-196.

It is worth comparing Basil, *reg.* 69, with RB 68. Basil spends most of this chapter piling up reasons why one should not refuse or even question an order: (a) To do so shows we are not ready to be obedient unto death. (b) This opens the door to the spirit of contradiction, which can ruin those who have poor judgment. (c) To question an order indicates that one has a passion for some other kind of work. At the very end of the discussion Basil grudgingly permits the monk to ask for a change. As for Benedict, he spends about half of RB 68 dealing positively with the manner of approaching the superior with a problem.

The three gerunds of verse 3 may be seen as the antitheses of the positive adverbs that preceded them: gently, obediently, patiently. Taken together they form an important teaching on the role of the subject in discerning the will of God that comes through the superior (Böckmann, 11.17).

4.

his suggestion (suggestionem suam). The word is repeated from the previous verse *(suggerat),* stressing the diffidence with which one should approach monastic authority.

does not change his mind or his order (in sua sententia . . . imperium perduraverit), literally, "the order of the superior persists in his mind." As with v. 2, there is an unmistakable degree of prolixity here, or perhaps awkwardness is the better word. Schmitz, Manning and Vogüé simply have "does not change his order," but the idea is more complex than that. It seems important here not to render *sententia* by "opinion," since that can simply mean a personal whim. It is expected that the superior will have thought the matter over carefully and probably consulted others before rejecting the plea of a monk for a change in orders.

he should realize (sciat). Vogüé, 3.464, seems to think that this shows that the monk has been intellectually convinced that the original order is better and should be obeyed. To me the matter looks different: one has presented the reasons that seem to override the order. Once the superior has rejected these reasons, one can only fall back on faith. The knowledge in question here *(sciat)* is not that the superior is infallibly and objectively "right," but that my submission to his order will free me from self-interest (Böckmann, 11.17).

the junior monk (junior). The startling appearance of this word in a chapter which has nothing do to with seniority should give us pause. It appears to be drawn from Cassian, *inst.* 4.10, the only source that

employs it. That is an ominous sign, for Cassian's whole context is different. For him, the unquestioning obedience of a disciple to a master is strictly a matter of individual, ascetical growth. By instant obedience, one learns to silence one's own egotistic pride and there is personal profit. Benedict also teaches instant obedience in RB 5, but from a different angle (see notes for RB 5, passim). What is more, the good of the whole community may require that a monk question an order. Personal sanctification is not the only consideration in the life of a cenobitic monk.

in his best interest (sibi expedire). As such, this does not mean that the monk is thinking only of himself, although combined with the term *junior* (see previous note) it may not have a much wider reference. The word *expedire* literally means to free one's foot from a snare, and it could well be that the superior needs to liberate a monk who is enmeshed in self-doubt and anxiety. Normally, the cenobitic monk should be able to assume that the decisions of authority in his regard are done for his best interests. Only when the evidence forces him to conclude otherwise should he attempt to question these arrangements.

5.

confident in the help of God (confidens de adjutorio Dei). Although the name of God has not yet appeared in this chapter, it is assumed all along that the basic motivation for obedience is to do the will of God. When the monk asks for a change of orders or assignments, he is not attempting to evade the will of God but rather to seek that will even more carefully. Here in the last verse, he is promised the divine assistance if he is seeking the divine pleasure. Notice that the root of "confident" is *fides,* faith. See *Index:* Faith.

obey (obediat). At the expense of elegance, I have made sure that this word appears last in the sentence and thus in the chapter. That is its position in the Latin original and it is likely that this is intentional on the part of Benedict. For him, the bottom line is obedience: when all is said and done, one must submit to authority. As Manning, 3.185, points out, there is no hint here of the modern notion of corresponsibility. In RB, abbots and monks do not negotiate a settlement: monks may present objections, but abbots are to be obeyed.

Even though Benedict does not discuss the case, it would not be right to remain silent about the situation where the monk finds he cannot obey in conscience. After all, conscience is one of the primary reference points in any discernment process. Certainly it would not be a typical thing for a monk to find himself faced with an order that seems unethical. If it were, he should seek another community or another

way of life. But in a given case, it could happen that a superior and a subject could both be in perfectly good conscience and totally disagree. If the system cannot tolerate that kind of contradiction, then it is forcing the monk to part ways. See Kardong, 13.199-201.

lovingly (ex caritate). This term seems to preclude the possibility that Benedict finally comes down on the side of blind obedience, for love always implies full consent. *Caritas (agape)* is the special New Testament word for love, with emphasis on its origin in God. For Benedict, *caritas* usually refers to love for the neighbor. The closest occurrence of *caritas* is 71.4, where the junior monk is told to obey the senior "out of love." Now, RB 71 is the least sentimental of texts; its concern is purely and simply the public order (see commentary). On analogy, in 68.5 one is to obey the abbot not out of affection but in order to maintain the social order. This is an important qualification to a chapter that is largely concerned, it seems to me, with the individual. When we say that *caritas* pertains to the social order, we do not mean that monastic obedience is primarily functional. The motivation is still religious: Christ is the most important Christian motivation: because he loved us first, we should love Christ in return and love each other (see note 72.11-12). At times, it is only this love that will enable us to do the hardest deeds of obedience. Böckmann, 11.18, insists that this is love for God and not for the neighbor. See *Index:* Love.

The remarks of Böckmann, 11.10-11,18, are worth a paraphrase: The chapter begins with a call for prompt obedience and ends with another call for obedience, but now it is much better informed. This doesn't happen automatically but through a struggle to know God's will. If we follow just the adverbs, we can notice how Benedict requires increasing maturity from the monk, and finally love. Actually, the last verse is the heart of the chapter. We see here that responsible obedience requires many decisions; it is not mechanical. When it is a question of the will of God, we must avoid all self-interest. To be objective about our own case we need discernment. The vocabulary does not echo RB 2 or RB 5, but RB 64–65. Nor is there much connection to RB 7. The abbatial model here is RB 64 (Augustine), where the abbot is mild and discerning. He only persists in his decisions so as to help the pusillanimous to grow beyond the point where their courage runs out. . . . Thus Benedict actually radicalizes obedience. He does not make it robotic or childish. With deep human sympathy Benedict leads the monk through a healthy process of honest expression of his mind to freedom and full, loving confidence in Christ. He subsumes nature.

LXIX: UT IN MONASTERIO NON PRAESUMAT ALTER ALTERUM DEFENDERE

[1]Praecavendum est ne quavis occasione praesumat alter alium defendere monachum in monasterio aut quasi tueri, [2]etiam si qualivis consanguinitatis propinquitate iungantur. [3]Nec quolibet modo id a monachis praesumatur, quia exinde gravissima occasio scandalorum oriri potest. [4]Quod si quis haec transgressus fuerit, acrius coerceatur.

RB 69: THAT NO ONE PRESUME TO DEFEND ANOTHER IN THE MONASTERY

1. Be especially careful that no monk presume on any occasion to defend another monk in the monastery or take him under his protection, as it were. 2. This is so, even if they are joined by some degree of family relationship. 3. In no way should monks presume to behave this way, for it can cause the most serious conflicts to arise. 4. If anyone violates this principle, he should be severely punished.

RB 69 Notes

T

As with the preceding chapter, the title is apparently derived from the first verse. Yet the form of the title is like the succeeding chapter (RB 70) and the content of these two chapters is very closely connected (Lentini, 626).

presume (praesumat). This term only appears in the titles of two chapters in RB: 69 and 70. This is an indication that these chapters were added to the Rule in the light of unpleasant, or even possibly traumatic, events in the life of Benedict's community. The term expresses indignation at an unwonted usurpation of authority by an unauthorized person. See *Index:* Presumption.

Certain temperaments, and perhaps certain cultures, are prone to partisan relationships. They tend to form cliques based on personal loyalties, featuring emotional attachments that override those of the larger group, be it the state, the Church or the monastic community. It is typical of such cliques that they defend their members right or wrong when they are in trouble. There are few social problems more dangerous than this in a cenobitic community.

1.

Be especially careful (Praecavendum est) is an intensification of *cavere*,

to avoid. Though he is not named, it is obvious that the chapter is addressed to the abbot, who is told to be on the lookout for an especially pernicious relation between his monks, namely, the tutelage of the weak by the strong.

defend (defendere). The same fault is condemned by Pachomius, *jud.* 16; *lib. Hors.* 24; Basil, *reg.* 26. Of course, it is not intrinsically wrong to defend a weak brother, but in this case he is being defended against the abbot. The latter is the only legitimate tutor of the monks, but in the course of events he may have to discipline them (see RB 2 and 64 passim). When another monk springs to their defense, this can be a violation of the cenobitic ethos.

take him under his protection, as it were (quasi tueri). The idea here is close to *defendere,* but perhaps a little more formal. One defends on an ad hoc basis, but to become a protector is a more permanent relation. Benedict takes the edge off this idea by the word *quasi* (as it were), but the point still comes across loud and clear. As long as there are young and old monks; weak and strong monks; simple and clever monks; there will be the potential for patronage. It is detrimental to the spiritual welfare of the monks involved and especially the common life.

on any occasion (quamvis occasione) could also be translated "for any reason" (Lentini, 626).

no monk . . . another monk (ne alter . . . alium). The title has *alter . . . alterum,* which is a more correct usage. Did the same person write both, and if so, did his grammar improve as time went on? See notes for title.

2.

This verse is grammatically joined to the preceding one, and has been separated from it for stylistic reasons.

some degree of blood relationship (qualivis consanguinitate). Another rendition could be: "no matter how close the relationship."

The introduction of family ties into the discussion of patronage is well warranted, given the fact that blood relations often join the same community. There is an obvious temptation for these relations to close ranks when one of them is "in trouble" with the abbot or any monastic authority. In Benedict's view, of course, the monastic community exists under a new dispensation with the abbot as the "father" of many "brothers." See RB 2.3 and *Index:* Brother, Father.

Conversely, it is not right for monastic authority to hold family members specially responsible for one another. If the monk has a duty

to forget his family ties, he has a right not to be held to those ties in unwarranted ways.

It is probably not unrealistic to suppose that there is a certain background of sexual dynamics lying behind this chapter. The most powerful emotional attachments are rarely lacking this element, so it must be taken into account. Although it has rarely been discussed in the monastic literature (an exception is Pachomius, SBo 107: Ruppert, 181), homosexuality is always a factor in monasteries. Where it is physically expressed, the task of monastic authority becomes immensely more complicated. See Kardong, 26.140.

3.

conflicts (scandala). The usual meaning is to cause others to stumble, but Blaise, s.v. 4, gives "conflict" as the last meaning. The same phrase ("serious conflicts to arise") appears in 65.1, where it is a question of a power struggle. That is the problem here as well, for the abbot's authority has been usurped and worldly motives have replaced those of the gospel.

In no way (Nec quolibet modo). Benedict has a habit of closing off any possible loopholes in his prohibitions by such language. This should not prevent us, however, from seeing that he is talking about a very specific case here. It is quite legitimate for a monk to intercede with the abbot on behalf of another monk, provided this is done humbly and without any motive of gaining power over another person's life.

This verse does not add much to the preceding ones, but it does indicate that tutelage can cause a wider circle of harm than just the two monks involved. When the community is tempted to take sides with either the abbot or another power broker there is indeed a cause for great scandal in which many can stumble.

4.

this principle (haec) is implied by the context.

rather severely punished (acrius coerceatur). Vogüé, 2.666, points out that *coercere* is used in connection with physical punishment in 2.28 and 30.3. It is quite possible that the same thing is meant here. Another clue in the same direction is the use of *acris* in both this verse and in 30.3. The same dire threats are made by Pachomius, *jud.* 16 and Basil, *reg.* 26.

LXX: UT NON PRAESUMAT PASSIM ALIQUIS CAEDERE

[1]Vitetur in monasterio omnis praesumptionis occasio; [2]atque constituimus ut nulli liceat quemquam fratrum suorum excommunicare aut caedere, nisi cui potestas ab abbate data fuerit. [3]*Peccantes* autem *coram omnibus arguantur ut ceteri metum habeant.* [4]Infantum vero usque quindecim annorum aetates disciplinae diligentia ab omnibus et custodia sit; [5]sed et hoc cum omni mensura et ratione.

[6]Nam in fortiori aetate qui praesumit aliquatenus sine praecepto abbatis vel in ipsis infantibus sine discretione exarserit, disciplinae regulari subiaceat, [7]quia scriptum est: *Quod tibi non vis fieri, alio ne feceris.*

RB 70: THAT NO ONE PRESUME TO STRIKE ANOTHER ARBITRARILY

1. Every opportunity for arbitrary behavior must be precluded from the monastery. 2. Therefore we decree that no one has the right to excommunicate or beat any of the brothers unless the abbot has given him that power. 3. Offenders should be publicly rebuked so others will experience fear. 4. Children up to the age of fifteen, however, should be carefully watched and disciplined by all. 5. But even this ought to be done in a moderate and reasonable way.

6. So therefore whoever presumes to punish any adult in any way whatsoever without the abbot's order, or flares up wildly at the children, must undergo the regular discipline. 7. For it is written: *Do not do to anyone else what you do not want done to yourself.*

RB 70 Notes

T

another is implied by the transitive verb *caedere*.

arbitrarily (passim). The idea is not so much that one hits out at random (the usual meaning of *passim*), but that one decides on one's own to punish another person.

This chapter is the exact mate of the previous one: RB 69 speaks of unauthorized favoritism among the monks; RB 70 speaks of unauthorized punishment of one monk by another. In both cases, it is a usurpation of the abbot's prerogatives ("presumes").

1.

arbitrary behavior (praesumptionis). Because *praesumere* is such a

typical part of Benedict's vocabulary, I have usually stuck with a very literal translation. Here, however, something else seems called for to make the point forcefully and clearly that no one is permitted to take on himself the function of punishment. The word *praesumere* occurs no less than six times in RB 69–70. See *Index:* Presumption.

opportunity (occasio). Vogüé, 2.667, points out that Benedict always uses this word in negative contexts. Both *occasio* and *praesumptio* are found in the previous chapter (69.1,3).

precluded (vitetur). The mss also have *vetetur,* but it is hard to tell which is preferable since the i/e were easily interchangeable. I understand the sense here to demand *veto* (to preclude) rather than *vito* (to avoid) since I think the author is addressing himself in the first verse before he sets down a rule for the monks.

2.

Therefore (atque). Along with Lentini, Steidle and Salzburg, I take *atque* here to have consequent force (see OLD, s.v. 5).

constituimus (we decree). Benedict also uses this rather solemn expression in 21.7, where he is likewise intent on establishing the authority of the abbot. Some manuscripts have *ordinamus* (we order) before *atque,* making the phrase even more impressive-sounding: "We order and we decree."

excommunicate or beat (excommunicare aut caedere). In 23.4-5 and 30.2-3, Benedict uses this pair to encompass the whole range of monastic penalties: if one is able to understand the meaning of excommunication, then that is applied; if not, blows must be resorted to. The excommunication spoken of here is not exclusion from the sacraments but rather the monastic excommunication from choir and/or table described in RB 23–24.

beat (caedere). It is not a question here of physical violence boiling up between two monks. That would be lamentable, but the issue is a beating administered by a stronger or older monk to a younger or weaker confrere. Our own society frowns on such things, or even forbids them altogether, but such squeamishness is relatively modern. As for Benedict, he mentions blows at several places in the Rule (e.g., 2.28; 28.3; 30.3) as a matter of daily life.

Pachomius, *inst.* 5, gives certain officials the power to punish. In that far-flung archipelago of monasteries, public order would have suffered if all punishment would have had to wait for the visit of the abbot-general. Probably Benedict is thinking along the same lines that

such power would only be given to a monastic official or an elder. On the other hand, these may be precisely the persons he is warning not to presume such power.

3.

This verse is a direct quote of 1 Timothy 5:20, which must be a favorite passage of Benedict, since he also quotes it in 23.3 and 48.20. But in those places he only quotes it in part; here it is given in full. In all three instances he is calling for public and exemplary punishment, but it seems that he is most insistent on that here. This is probably so because the usurpation of punishment is such a serious threat to the public order of the community.

Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 26, uses the same text to institute the public beating of offenders (Vogüé, 2.667).

The Mediterranean shame/honor culture is the context of this verse and of other passages in RB that recommend public reprimands and exemplary punishment. See note on RB 43.7.

Offenders (Peccantes). It is customary to translate the biblical term as "sinners," but it should be remembered that Benedict is only dealing here with violations of domestic order and not the divine law.

rebuked (arguantur). As in RB 2.23,25, Benedict arranges that those who can understand it should be corrected verbally and not physically. Presumably someone who sets out to punish another would possess some education and status.

experience fear (metum habeant), that is, anticipatory fear that deters one from a harmful course of action. In a public culture such as prevailed in that time and place, it was natural to learn through the experiences of others. Fear of punishment may not be as elevated a concept as fear of the Lord, but it is not therefore without value. See *Index:* Fear.

4.

Children . . . by all (Infantum . . . custodia sit), literally, "The care of discipline and the watching of children . . . is (the business) of all."

The same principle is stated in RB 63.9,19: The basic hierarchy of the community does not apply to the case of children. In their case, every adult is "senior" and responsible for them. In this matter, Benedict parts company with Basil, *reg.* 7, who permits only certain members to teach and discipline the children. Benedict seems to share more in the traditional tribal ethos that sees the raising of children to be the business of the whole community, not just the nuclear family or specialists. See *Index:* Child.

The age of fifteen is established by RM 14.79 as "the age of reason." At that point, the Master deems the person ready for excommunication instead of beatings! Harsh as this seems, it is not as barbaric as it sounds, for the Master, followed by Benedict (see note 23.5) teaches that punishment should be fitted to the understanding of the person. This shows that they do not see penalties as vindictive but educative.

carefully (diligentia). When it is remembered that the root of this word is *diligere* (to love), it will be clear that this verse is not just concerned with the punishment of children. Rather, they are to be cared for and loved by all the community.

5.

even (et), that is, in reference to the ban on arbitrary punishments.

moderate (mensura). Benedict is famous for his devotion to moderation, though he may not be the controlled personality he is sometimes made out to be. See *Index:* Measure. In the matter of discipline, it is crucial that authority not give way to anger, irritation, or excess of any kind. Young people appreciate evenhandedness and fairness in their superiors.

reasonable (ratione) may have Christian overtones that are not obvious on the surface. See *Index:* Reason.

6.

This verse serves to sum up the contents of the chapter, but it also introduces the new idea of immoderate violence toward children—and perhaps adults as well.

presumes . . . flares up (praesumit . . . exarserit). In my translation the verbs are coordinate, but in Latin the first one is indicative and the second subjunctive (or perhaps future perfect indicative). It could be that the second verb is dependent on the first and this could explain the lack of a complement for "presume."

adult (in fortiori aetate). Rochais, 187, thinks that this refers to the subject, but since it is a parallel to the children *(in ipsis infantibus),* it must be the object of the verb.

wildly (sine discretione). Unbridled temper is unacceptable in one working with children and adolescents. Unfortunately, parents with this tendency cannot be disqualified and the children must suffer. The term *discretio* in RB usually refers to the ability to understand others, but here it seems to be equivalent to "without moderation" (Blaise, s.v. 3). Perhaps, though, it means that some things are worthy of anger and others are not. The good disciplinarian should know the difference. See *Index:* Discernment.

regular discipline (disciplinae regulari) may appear to be a reference to a coherent penal system, but it probably is not. See *Index:* Discipline.

7.

The same biblical quote (Matt 7:12; Tob 4:16) is used to close RB 61 (v. 14) and it is transposed into the third person in RB 4.9.

Lentini, 631, remarks with good insight that verse 7 highlights the communal nature of this chapter. Rather than just a defense of abbatial prerogatives, it is also calculated to preserve the peace and love of the members for one another. The Golden Rule is a solid base on which to erect the edifice of Christian charity that makes Benedictine community possible.

LXXI: UT OBOEDIENTES SIBI SINT INVICEM

[1]Oboedientiae bonum non solum abbati exhibendum est ab omnibus, sed etiam sibi invicem ita oboediant fratres, [2]scientes per hanc oboedientiae viam se ituros ad Deum. [3]Praemisso ergo abbatis aut praepositorum qui ab eo constituuntur imperio, cui non permittimus privata imperia praeponi, [4]de cetero omnes iuniores prioribus suis omni caritate et sollicitudine oboediant. [5]Quod si quis contentiosus reperitur, corripiatur.

[6]Si quis autem frater pro quavis minima causa ab abbate vel a quocumque priore suo corripitur quolibet modo, [7]vel si leviter senserit animos prioris cuiuscumque contra se iratos vel commotos quamvis modice, [8]mox sine mora tamdiu prostratus in terra ante pedes eius iaceat satisfaciens, usque dum benedictione sanetur illa commotio. [9]Quod qui contempserit facere, aut corporali vindictae subiaceat aut, si contumax fuerit, de monasterio expellatur.

RB 71: THAT THEY OBEY ONE ANOTHER

1. The blessing of obedience is not only something that everyone ought to show the abbot, but the brothers should also obey one another. 2. They know that they will go to God by this path of obedience. 3. Therefore, except for an order of the abbot or the priors appointed by him, which we permit no private command to override, 4. all juniors must obey their seniors with every mark of loving attention. 5. But if someone is found resistant in this matter, he should be rebuked.

6. If, however, any brother is rebuked for the slightest reason by the abbot or any senior in any way whatsoever, 7. and if he sees that any

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6. If, however, any brother is rebuked for the slightest reason by the abbot or any senior in any way whatsoever, 7. and if he sees that any

senior at all is even faintly perturbed at him or disturbed in any way, 8. he should instantly prostrate on the floor at his feet to make satisfaction and remain there until the disturbance has been healed by a blessing. 9. Anyone who refuses to do this should undergo corporal punishment, or if he remains recalcitrant, he should be expelled from the monastery.

RB 71 Notes

T

The title begins with *ut* (optative) as do the titles of the previous two chapters. RB 69–71 are three chapters that all deal with fraternal relations: 69–70 discuss two abuses of communal life while 71 presents it in its ideal form, namely, mutual obedience. At least that is the way the chapter begins, but it soon veers off into other possible abuses of obedience. And it ends with a harsh condemnation of those who fail to make satisfaction for offenses against mutual obedience. Thus Benedict's pattern of ideal beginnings and harsh endings repeats itself. In fact, the next chapter, RB 72, is the real discussion of mutual love and obedience. See Lentini, 632.

Normally we think of obedience as something given to a superior, but the monastic tradition anterior to Benedict had already known an obedience of equals. Basil, *reg.* 13 and 64, speaks of this kind of obedience, as does Cassian in *conf.* 16 when speaking of friendship. For a full discussion of RB 71, see Kardong, 24.3-16.

1.

the blessing of obedience (Oboedientiae bonum). The term *bonum* is intriguing. Most commentators take the obvious path and tell us it is a "virtue," which it plainly is. But *RB 1980* is more imaginative in saying it is a "blessing." If it is just a "virtue" (Blaise, s.v. *bonum*), why does Benedict not use *virtus?* One wonders if there is not here an oblique reference to the *labor* of obedience spoken of in Prol 2. At the beginning of the monastic life, obedience is indeed a "labor," but if this central cenobitic value is sufficiently internalized, then one can come to love obedience as a "blessing." In this way, *obedientiae bonum* becomes an inclusion to the Prologue. See *Index:* Obedience.

Manning, 3.189, considers RB 71 to be a reprise of RB 5 on obedience, much as RB 64 is a later development of RB 2. While the earlier chapter (RB 5) mainly dealt with the individual, ascetical aspects of obedience, now the focus is on its communal dimensions. The purpose of RB 5 was to further the spiritual growth of the individual monk by reducing ego;

now the purpose of mutual obedience is to bind the community closer together in Christian love. In my opinion, the chapter sets out to do that but gets waylaid by verse 3. See Kardong, 24.4.

Basil, *reg.* 13, deals with the question of conflicting calls on our obedience, and especially with a demand to act against the divine commands. Obviously one must reject such a demand in the name of the higher law of God. Cassian uses the phrase *oboedientiae bonum* in *inst.* 4.30 and 12.31 to refer to obedience to superiors.

to the abbot (abbati). From the very beginning of the chapter, Benedict seems nervous. He sets out to discuss mutual obedience, but he is well aware that the dominant form of obedience is hierarchical. Therefore he is very careful to cover his flanks by disclaimers. Unfortunately, this preoccupation with rank will take him completely off the track of his subject and eventually lead him to exaggerated claims for hierarchical obedience in 71.6-9.

obey one another (sibi invicem . . . oboediant). Instead of parallel expressions in the two parts of this verse, the author switches from a periphrastic construction to an active one. There is no way to translate the verse both elegantly *(RB 1980)* and accurately. The notion of mutual obedience here at the end of the document is rather startling, since it has never been mentioned before in the Rule. Nevertheless, equality and mutuality have come up at times, e.g., RB 2.20 on the equality of all persons in Christ and RB 34 on the equitable distribution of goods. See *Index:* Mutuality.

2.

In the original Latin, this verse is grammatically dependent on the previous one. Strictly speaking, it probably means that the brothers consider obedience a great "blessing" because it is in fact the way to salvation. In the spiritual life there is no way forward except through obedience to the will of God.

they will go . . . this path of obedience (per hanc obedientiae viam . . . se ituros). The image of the monastic life as a "way" is very prominent in the Holy Rule. Not only is the term *via* often employed (see *Index:* Way), but there are multiple instances where spiritual progress is described in dynamic terms. Two key texts that speak of this process are 58.8 (the hard things that lead to God) and 72.2 (good zeal that leads to God). "This" path of obedience does not refer to just mutual obedience but to all religious obedience. Nonetheless, the verse does apply to mutual obedience and it is hard to imagine what higher praise one could have for it.

3.

Therefore (Ergo). It is puzzling why Benedict uses this connective, since what follows (hierarchical obedience) is not the logical consequence of what precedes. Although we are not surprised when the author quickly qualifies mutual obedience with a statement about the priority of obedience to the abbot, the demand for hierarchical obedience of junior to senior is unexpected.

priors (praepositorum). Since there is only one prior at a time (see RB 65), this could refer to successive priors (Vogüé, 2.668). Another possibility is to take *praepositus* in its etymological sense, namely, "one placed ahead": then, it could refer to any superior subordinate to the abbot. The Master calls the deans *praepositi* and has two of them, but that does not seem to apply here. RB 71 bears little or no resemblance to any chapter in RM.

private commands (privata imperia), that is, from a monk who is not a superior. But in the next breath Benedict will distinguish between private commands of a senior and one is who is not a senior. These layers of qualifications tend to make the reader forget that the subject of the chapter was to be *mutual* obedience, that is, the obedience of equals or even obedience given to one who is junior.

4.

The Latin text has *de cetero* at the beginning of this verse, which is grammatically the main clause of a complex sentence, v. 3 being the dependent clause. Because it begins with "Except for," no other adverbial signal is needed in English; hence I have omitted any translation of *de cetero*.

juniors (juniores). In fact, the entire chapter is addressed to the junior monk. As with RB 68, the "underling" is told how to approach the matter of obedience; RB 69 and 70 seem to be addressed to the senior monk and tell him how to treat the junior. Since these chapters are addressed *exclusively* to one party in communal interactions, they must be filled out with reflection on the obligations of the *other* party as well. This exegetical principle will be of great importance in interpreting 71.6-9. See Kardong, 24.5. See *Index:* Junior.

seniors (prioribus). The confusion of terminology continues, but it seems clear enough that the subject now is seniority. The word *prior* is used in similar fashion in 63.10. Lentini, 634, claims that Benedict never really teaches the obedience of equals in this chapter; rather, his is always a hierarchical system. That may be true, but then he must have had a change of heart in RB 72. Unlike the Master, Benedict seems

to give every senior the right to demand some form of obedience from the junior (Holzherr, 322). See *Index:* Senior.

every mark of loving attention (omni caritate et solicitudine). The language employed here indicates that the obedience of juniors to seniors is not simply that of the weaker to the stronger. Rather, it is the attention that one pays to someone who can truly help and guide him on the way of life. As is often the case with Benedict, the spirit in which something is done is as least as important as the doing itself.

Although the idea of "care" *(solicitudo)* comes up often in RB, it is normally extended to the weak and powerless. Here it must have a slightly different nuance. See *Index:* Care. Obedience out of love also appears in RB 68.5, but the case is somewhat different. There love is what enables the monk to obey even when reason tells him it makes no sense; that is, love is the last resort. In 71.4, however, love is the normal spirit of mutual obedience. For Vogüé, 3.471-476, the love that is mentioned here is really the love *(caritas = agape)* of Christ unto death for the sins of the world. This sacrificial love is the obedience that the junior monk is asked to exhibit toward his seniors. See *Index:* Love.

5.

resistant in this matter (contentiosus), that is, unwilling to accept a subservient role in the cenobitic hierarchy. The word *contentiosus* itself means prone to arguing and given to indocility, traits incompatible with obedience. In RB 3.9, the worse case is mentioned, namely, quarreling with one's abbot.

rebuked (corripiatur). Although the word can refer to either verbal or physical punishment, here it would seem to mean the former. The plot thickens, however, in the following verses. See *Index:* Punishment.

With its call for punishment of a feisty junior, this verse looks very much like a typical RB chapter ending. Yet the chapter goes on for four more rather unpleasant verses. Perhaps the very idea of a contentious junior monk kindles the outburst of 71.6-9.

6.

any . . . slightest . . . any . . . whatsoever (quis . . . quavis minima . . . quocumque . . . quolibet). Vogüé, 2.668, calls this juridic language. It is obviously intent on closing up any loopholes that might seem to exist regarding the question of hierarchical obedience. The piling up of indefinite adjectives and adverbs gives the verse an overloaded quality; the tone becomes hectoring and almost hysterical. For similar examples see RB 7.63; 59.3; 69.3.

An interesting parallel to RB 71.6-9 is a conference on self-accusation by Dorotheos of Gaza, *doc. div.* 7. In it, the Palestinian abbot deals with the case of senior and junior monks who accuse each other respectively of lack of respect and lack of confidence. Dorotheos insists that the only solution to such a circle of recriminations is that *both* be convinced of their guilt and seek forgiveness. Benedict only requires this of the junior monk. He never read Dorotheos, but even if he had, it seems that his hierarchical mentality would preclude complete reciprocity between cenobitic brothers.

senior (priore). Lentini, 635, thinks that this refers to some superior because not every senior is permitted to beat a junior (RB 70). I would counter that the case here is not physical beating but verbal admonishment. This does not settle the issue, but the vocabulary oscillates so wildly in this chapter that it is hard to pinpoint it. Of course, it would be less unusual to demand deference for a superior than for every senior.

7.

in any way (quavis modice) is a continuation of the practice of multiplying indefinite adverbs in this section.

even faintly (leviter). One does not wait for a major disturbance but is willing to make satisfaction for even the slightest unpleasantness caused to one's senior.

Ms Hatton 48, A.D. 700, has changed the plural adjectives in this verse to singulars, apparently to conform it to a single prior. Since it is hard to imagine that the other scribes would deliberately change the text to speak of prostration before many seniors, the plural reading is to be preferred.

perturbed (iratos). Although Benedict never condones anger in his monks, and in 4.22-23 urges them to avoid it in all its forms, nevertheless at times he admits that it can occur. In the previous chapter he mentions a senior who "flares up" *(exarserit)* at the young (70.6). Now he counsels the junior to bear such wrath patiently and even ask forgiveness.

sees . . . disturbed (senserit . . . commotos). These words may be derived from Cassian, *conf.* 16, on friendship, yet the spirit of that treatise is quite different than RB 71.6-9. First, Cassian is dealing with a relationship of equals; indeed, his basic principle is the ancient Stoic one that true friendship can *only* be between equals. For him, an imbalance of virtue is deleterious to friendship, since the better person will continually have to give in to preserve the peace. Benedict, though, is discussing a relationship that is by definition *unequal*. Furthermore, he

requires that the junior alone resolve the conflict by self-abasement. Does this mean that the junior is expected to be the more virtuous of the two? Obviously, the two situations do not mesh. See Kardong, 24.8-10.

8.

mox sine mora (instantly), literally, "immediately, without delay." This language is not unusual in a chapter that is laced with pleonasm, but I have condensed it into a strong English word.

prostrate . . . and remain there (prostratus . . . jaceat), literally, "fall prostrate." I have chosen to separate the two ideas so as to stress the idea of continued prostration. In my rendition, "prostrate" is actually a translation of *jaceat* and "remain there" is English for *prostratus*.

has been healed by a blessing (benedictione sanetur). This is curious language, since it suggests that the anger of the senior has been "healed," but if that is the case, then the senior heals himself by blessing the junior. Schmitz, 159, probably has it right when he says: "a blessing indicates that the emotion has been calmed." See Kardong, 24.7.

The calming of wrath in a senior makes us wonder if the purpose of RB 71.6-9 is the supreme Stoic value of *apátheia*. Yet if we remember that the chapter is addressed to the junior, then it can hardly be so, for the most that one person can do for another person's anger is to remove the objective causes for it. Here one makes a prostration of satisfaction. But on a deeper level anger is the sole responsibility of the one who is angry and only he can overcome it in himself by the grace of God. The hierarchical system has ruined many persons by placing them in positions where they never again hear the hard truth about themselves.

This brief discussion shows the basic weakness of RB 71: it does not take account of community life in any realistic sense. No system that requires underlings to solve all conflict by capitulation and self-accusation can be said to be healthy. See Kardong, 24.11-13.

make satisfaction (satisfaciens). G. Mansini, 1, thinks that this term is the key to the chapter and possibly to the entire Rule of Benedict. Unlike punishment, satisfaction is an active idea that shows that a person has become fully convinced of his own sin and wishes to make amends for it. As such, it is simply the acting out of humility. While agreeing that such an attitude is what Benedict is trying to inculcate in his monks (see Prol 6-8,36,42-44; 7.11,64), it seems to me that RB 71 presents such psychological barriers to the modern reader that this message cannot get through.

RB 44.1-10 describes the details of the ritual of satisfaction. For his part, the Master requires a profound bow and not prostration for the same purpose. Cassian, *inst.* 4.16,1, speaks of prostration lasting until one is blessed. Dorotheus, *doc. div.* 7, recommends a bow to calm the irritation of another.

Lentini, 637, admits wryly that this demand for humble satisfaction before offended elders has its limits. He notes that some old people are so irascible and "strange" that there would be very frequent prostrations before them.

9.

refuses (contempserit) seems to be a weak translation for this verb, but it can mean a simple avoidance or refusal without any implication of disdain (OLD, s.v. *condemno,* 4).

recalcitrant (contumax). The issue is awareness: if someone understands full well that the Rule requires satisfaction for faults and offenses, then refusal to make that satisfaction is a very serious matter. The person is then expelled not for stubbornness, which is a temperamental trait, but for refusal to submit to the demands of community life.

expellatur (expelled). It is a sign of the author's ire that the junior monk who refuses to make satisfaction is summarily expelled without the preliminary steps of excommunication from table and oratory. The same thing occurs in 2.28 and 62.10. One may ask whether Benedict is violating his own system (RB 23–26) or whether that system is implied in passages like these.

LXXII: DE ZELO BONO QUOD DEBENT MONACHI HABERE

[1]Sicut est zelus amaritudinis malus qui separat a Deo et ducit ad infernum, [2]ita est zelus bonus qui separat a vitia et ducit ad Deum et ad vitam aeternam. [3]Hunc ergo zelum ferventissimo amore exerceant monachi, [4]id est ut *honore se invicem praeveniant*, [5]infirmitates suas sive corporum sive morum patientissime tolerent, [6]oboedientiam sibi certatim impendant; [7]nullus quod sibi utile iudicat sequatur, sed quod magis alio; [8]caritatem fraternitatis caste impendant, [9]amore Deum timeant, [10]abbatem suum sincera et humili caritate diligant, [11]Christo omnino nihil praeponant, [12]qui nos pariter ad vitam aeternam perducat.

RB 44.1-10 describes the details of the ritual of satisfaction. For his part, the Master requires a profound bow and not prostration for the same purpose. Cassian, *inst.* 4.16,1, speaks of prostration lasting until one is blessed. Dorotheus, *doc. div.* 7, recommends a bow to calm the irritation of another.

Lentini, 637, admits wryly that this demand for humble satisfaction before offended elders has its limits. He notes that some old people are so irascible and "strange" that there would be very frequent prostrations before them.

9.

refuses (contempserit) seems to be a weak translation for this verb, but it can mean a simple avoidance or refusal without any implication of disdain (OLD, s.v. *condemno,* 4).

recalcitrant (contumax). The issue is awareness: if someone understands full well that the Rule requires satisfaction for faults and offenses, then refusal to make that satisfaction is a very serious matter. The person is then expelled not for stubbornness, which is a temperamental trait, but for refusal to submit to the demands of community life.

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RB 72: THE GOOD ZEAL THAT MONKS OUGHT TO HAVE

1. Just as there is an evil and bitter zeal that separates one from God and leads to hell, 2. so too there is a good zeal that separates one from evil and leads to God and eternal life. 3. Thus monks should practice this zeal with the warmest love: 4. "Let them strive to be the first to honor one another." 5. They should bear each other's weaknesses of both body and character with the utmost patience. 6. They must compete with one another in obedience. 7. No one should pursue what he judges advantageous to himself, but rather what benefits others. 8. They must show selfless love to the brothers. 9. Let them fear God out of love. 10. They should love their abbot with sincere and humble charity. 11. Let them prefer absolutely nothing to Christ, 12. and may he lead us all together to everlasting life.

RB 72 Notes

T

zeal (zelus) is treated here as a neuter word *(quod),* but as a masculine in vv. 1-2. It is a Greek loan word that connotes an exceptional fervor and enthusiasm for an object, whether good or bad. As is suggested by the derivative word "jealous," the term usually has a bad connotation. "Zealot" has the same negative flavor and Benedict uses *zelus* in that sense in 4.66, 64.16 and 65.22, the latter being an especially powerful text. Nevertheless, the term is used positively in 64.6 (zeal for God), and here in RB 72 it stands for the highest value of all, namely, love. Benedict is willing to use this risky word to make an important point: religion is by and large a matter of the heart.

The Master speaks once of "zeal for good," (*zelus boni:* 92.51) but the context could hardly be less like that of RB 72. For while this chapter is about sacrificial love for one another, RM 92 describes a ludicrous contest of monks for the position of abbot. So here at the end of the Rule, Benedict fully separates himself from his literary mentor and speaks with his own fully mature and authentic voice.

I wish to specially acknowledge A. Böckmann, 9.14-40, upon whose exegesis of RB 72 I have depended greatly. I have internalized her insights on this chapter so thoroughly and employed them for so many lectures and papers that I hardly know where her thoughts end and my own begin.

1.

evil and bitter zeal (zelus amaritudinis malus) as in 4.66. The use of

amaritudo with *zelus* is also found in James 3:14, which criticizes contention among Christians. James says that the wisdom that comes from above brings peace, but "bitter zeal" must come from hell, since it promotes conflict and hatred.

Cassian, *conf.* 16.6,16-17, speaks of a "bitter silence" which is not an emotional outburst of hatred, but a cold refusal of love. This can drive the object of such cold fury deeper and deeper into sadness and depression. See Holzherr, 325.

leads one to hell (ducit ad infernum). Clement of Rome, *ad Cor.* 9, also speaks of an evil zeal that leads to perdition *(mortem),* referring to a revolt of the lower clergy of Corinth, who have in fact deposed their bishop. Clement demands his reinstatement and castigates their action as "bad zeal." It is worth noting that Clement also demands that they replace their bad zeal with good zeal: there is no question of eliminating zeal altogether. Likewise, the monastic enterprise without love is a cold charade.

Vogüé, 2.670, thinks that the real source of this verse may be the Two Ways theme of Matthew 7:14-15 applied to the matter of zeal. This motif is met with often enough in patristic literature (e.g., Irenaeus, *demonstr. apost. praed.* I, Armenian version; Jerome, *in Ezech.* 16.52) that it is difficult to know where Benedict got it. At any rate, it is not original with him. The biblical theme, which has ancient roots in Hebrew religion (Deut 30:9; Jer 21:8), is also alluded to in RB 5.11 (see *Index:* Way). The Hebrew texts simply present the choice of obedience or disobedience to God's command, but Matthew makes the right way narrow and the wrong way broad. That ascetical twist is maintained by RB 5.11. The present verse does not use *via,* but the verb *ducit* reflects the dynamic spirituality of Benedict. The same verb *(perducat)* occurs in 72.12, forming an inclusion with v. 1.

2.

Caesarius of Arles, *reg. virg.* 65, speaks of the "good zeal of the Holy Spirit." The subsequent verses of RB 72 make it clear that good zeal (= love) comes from God and not the self.

evil (vitia) is grammatically anomalous since it is an accusative following the preposition *a* (from). Although vv. 1-2 are carefully constructed and balanced, they are not completely so. If they were, this second verse would read: ". . . separates from hell and leads to God." Benedict knows enough about style to see that complete symmetry can be repetitious and boring. *Vitia* is translated "evil" here because the context seems broader than personal vices. Nevertheless, the chapter is all about personal morality. See *Index:* Vice.

to God (ad Deum) is also seen in RM Prol 14, which likewise refers to the Two Ways.

eternal life (vitam aeternam) is repeated in v. 12, forming a strong inclusion with "to lead." The concern for that which will lead us to heaven is entirely appropriate here in the last regular chapter of the Holy Rule. The eschatological inclusion colors the entire chapter, giving it an aura of heightened importance. It is a matter of life and death.

Böckmann, 9.17, notes that Benedict gives many examples of good zeal in his Rule. For example, the abbot is shown exercising this quality in RB 27 (reconciling the excommunicated) and RB 36 (caring for the sick). In RB 53 and 66, the author urges the community to show particular attention to guests and visitors. All of these are particular applications of the virtue, but in RB 72 it is generalized: all are to show good zeal to all.

3.

Thus (ergo). Unlike most translators, I take this to be a strong connective linking v. 3 with what precedes, not with what follows. The logic would then be that since good zeal leads to heaven, *thus* monks ought to practice it fervently. This rendition also understands *hunc* (this) to point to v. 2 and not to v. 4.

fervent love (ferventissimo amore) will in fact be the subject of the rest of the chapter: it is a paean to love. Although *amor* (Greek *eros*) had a bad name in the earliest Christian centuries, no doubt due to its licentious overtones, by the time of Benedict the word seems to have become respectable. Indeed, Benedict often uses it together with the name of Christ or God (see *Index:* Love) to refer to the highest kind of Christian love. The superlative *ferventissimo* is usually toned down by translators; *RB 1980* simply has "fervent." Schmitz, however, has the superlative. One wonders the reason for this reluctance to give the word its full value. Could it be a suspicion of a certain Latin bombast? But Benedict does not use the superlative loosely. Or could it be that the "warmest" love among monks makes people nervous?

practice (exerceant) is a no-nonsense, utilitarian kind of word, the perfect foil for "warmest." It proves that this is no purple passage, but rather the introduction to a down-to-earth discussion of practical deeds of love. See Overview, C.

4.

At this point Benedict begins to enumerate the ways of love among the members of the community. Each verse is a complete aphorism ringing the changes on love, much in the same fashion as 1 Corinthians

13, Paul's hymn to *agape*. This literary form is also somewhat similar to RB 4, the Instruments of Good Works, except that now the author focuses on a single Instrument, namely, love. Love, of course, is the compendium and epitome of Christianity.

This verse is a direct quote of Romans 12:10, the only biblical quote in a chapter which is, however, saturated with scriptural overtones. Paul's point is that just as Christ is worthy of *timae* (honor, renown), so is each person in whom he dwells, and indeed every single human being. Benedict uses the same Pauline text in 63.17, but there he employs it to teach hierarchical respect. Here it is used in its pristine, egalitarian sense. Paul expresses the same idea in 1 Corinthians 12:23, where he demands that honor be shown to all, but especially to the members of the congregation who are less gifted with spectacular charisms.

honor (honor) seems to be a rather flat and cold type of love, but nevertheless Benedict places it first on his list. This could mean that basic human respect is seen by him as a very high form of love. In fact, the rest of the chapter will also speak of some rather prosaic and unemotional forms of love, the very things that make long-term community possible. See Kardong, 23.205-206; see *Index:* Honor.

Let them strive to be the first (se . . . praeveniant), literally, "let them go first." The image is one of a race or a competition, but of course here they strive to defer to one another and not to defeat one another. 72.6 will make the same point about obedience. Some translators of Romans 12:10 take *prosaegeomai* as a form of *aegeisthai* = "esteem more highly." In either case, this is the antithesis of the "me first" ethos that plagues modern capitalist society. See *Index:* Competition.

one another (invicem) is a word that speaks of mutuality and reciprocity. Benedict often uses the term in situations where mutual service is paramount (e.g., 22.6,8; 35.1,6). Here in RB 72, mutual love is presented as the deepest meaning of the cenobitic life. See *Index:* Mutuality.

5.

weaknesses (Infirmitates) are found in great profusion throughout RB (the concordance shows 22 instances of the word and its cognate *infirmus*). Benedict makes sure that we understand that he is not just talking about physical illness, but also character defects. The monastery is not a mental hospital, and there are usually high standards for admittance, but each one has traits that others find hard to bear. How we bear them says very much about the quality of our life together. See *Index:* Weakness.

each other's (suas). Strictly speaking, *suas* should mean "their own," but the context hardly allows that. Nevertheless, our own weaknesses

may be the hardest of all to bear; an inability to accept what we cannot change about ourselves can be the root of great difficulties in the spiritual life and for mental health.

utmost patience (patientissime). As is often the case in this chapter, the adverb is especially evocative. This particular virtue, of course, is one of Benedict's favorites, appearing as it does in many key passages throughout the Rule. Salzburg has the inspired translation "inexhaustible" *(unerschöflicher)* patience. At any rate, the superlative here must not be watered down, for cenobitic life is precisely a lifetime exercise in patience. See Borias, 19.41-51; Casey, 7.1-23; see *Index:* Patience.

bear (tolerent) needs to be understood carefully. Although the English "tolerate" seems to be a literal translation, it is in fact not what is meant. *Tolerare* really means "to carry," and here we are asked to help carry one another's burdens. The obvious biblical resonance is with Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." The Latin Bible uses this verb to describe Christ's carrying of the cross (1 Pet 2:24); it is also close to *tollit:* Christ *takes away* the sins of the world (John 1:24). Hence, the mutual bearing of weaknesses is a participation in the saving activity of Christ.

Cassian uses very similar vocabulary to this verse in *inst.* 12.33,1 and *conf.* 6.3,5. He presents the same idea in other words in *conf.* 19.9.

6.

They must compete with one another in obedience (Oboedientiam sibi certatim impendant), literally, "offer obedience to one another competitively." All the verbs in vv. 3-12, except for v. 7, are identical in form: third person plural, present subjunctive. Since they can be construed as either jussive or hortative, I have varied the translations in order to avoid repetitiveness.

compete (certatim) is actually an adverb, one of many such that play an important role throughout this chapter. The idea of a competition in mutual obedience is very similar to v. 4, where the monks are to outstrip each other in mutual respect. Whether the author intended it or not, there is irony here, for people do not normally strive to take the last place (Luke 14:7-14). Although the Latin does not say so, the meaning is clearly that the monks obey *one another*. Thus the promise of RB 71.1-2 is fulfilled (see notes). See *Index:* Competition.

in obedience (oboedientiam). Here at the end of the Rule Benedict broadens his doctrine of obedience to include all members of the community. While obedience to the abbot (RB 5 and 68) is the predominant form of the virtue in the Rule, now this concept is extended to the

whole body. This is typical of RB 72, which is not hierarchical but egalitarian in its purview. Furthermore, mutual obedience is clearly a form of horizontal and even sacrificial obedience. To obey one's abbot is normally to obey a Christlike person, though abbots sometimes do not come up to that standard (see note 7.35-43). Here one is obedient along with the obedient Christ, who was obedient unto death (7.34; Phil 2:8). See *Index:* Obedience.

7.

advantageous (utile). Though the word has a wide range of possible meanings and most of them seem banal, Benedict uses the term in some passages where the common good seems paramount (3.3; 48.18; 65.12; see *Index:* Useful). The word has a basic meaning of public, objective good, and so it is appropriate for a discussion of cenobitic love and service. The willingness and desire to do whatever is useful for the community is perhaps the most valuable trait in a cenobitic monk. It is the practical face of love in a community that calls itself the body of Christ. It is also an effective barrier against the modern curse of careerism in monasteries.

but rather what benefits others (sed quod magis alio), literally, "but rather to another." This apparently bland truism is really quite radical, since it asks us to go entirely against our selfish instincts. As such it is perhaps the driving force of this chapter on Christian love, for it asks for love at great personal expense. It is a paraphrase of Philippians 2:4, which comes just before the great Carmen Christi, the hymn to the kenotic love of Jesus for the world unto death. It is interesting that the usually accurate RSV translation backs off at Philippians 2:4 from complete altruism, giving us "Let each of you look *not only* to his own interests but *also* to the interests of others." There is some textual justification for this interpretation, but since Paul certainly demands complete altruism in 1 Corinthians 10:24 and 13:5, it is likely he is also doing so in Philippians 2:4.

Even though one comes to the monastery to "save one's soul," that pursuit cannot be accomplished by directing all one's attention on the self. By and large personal spiritual progress comes about indirectly through going out to the other in love. At least that is the overall teaching of the New Testament. Experience also shows that it is the indispensable ethos for a successful and happy cenobitic community. Indeed, that most cenobitic of monastic legislators, Basil of Caesarea, extols selflessness as the indispensable bond of community (*reg.* 3; 12).

8.

selfless (caste). If the literal translation "chaste" is used here it must be

understood in a broader sense than just the sexual. What is called for in this verse is a love that is not acquisitive but rather disinterested, that is, a love that does not look to the advantage of the self but of the other. Thus the point of this verse is really the same as the previous one. The same idea is found in 64.6, where the word is used along with "zeal for God." Thus good zeal is defined in this verse by love for pure motives.

Holzherr, 327, comments that although Benedict seems to be bound to the master/disciple model in the early chapters of his Rule (on the basis of the Rule of the Master), now he gives full emphasis to communal spirituality. Whereas Basil, *reg*. 3, and Augustine, *reg. serv.* 1.1-3, emphasize community from the very outset of their Rules, Benedict only does so toward the end. I would add that many books on the Benedictine Rule seem to fizzle out toward the end—a telltale sign that their authors are not much interested in community.

love (caritatem). This is the New Testament term for Christian love *(agape),* which comes from God and is not marred by self-interest *(eros).* Benedict uses three words for love in this chapter: *amor, caritas* and *diligo*. Moreover he uses them indiscriminately: vv. 8, 9 and 10 use all three words in a positive sense, probably for variety. See *Index:* Love.

to the brothers (fraternitatis), literally, "of brotherhood." "Brother" *(frater)* is Benedict's usual word for the monk, though he rarely uses the abstract noun *(fraternitas).* The word always has a connotation of mutuality, since one cannot be a brother without another. This whole chapter is about fraternity in its deepest sense of unity in Christ. See *Index:* Brother.

For reflections on cenobitic fraternity, see Wathen, 10.123-130.

Verses 8-10 are a triad on love for the brethren, God and the abbot. There does not appear to be a logic in the order, at least that I can detect.

9.

The notion of fear for God out of love is not easy, but that seems to be the preferable reading. The important Ms Hatton 48 attaches *amore* to the preceding verse, but that causes serious stylistic problems: (1) It means that v. 9 lacks an adverb, while all the other verses of this chapter have one. (2) It means that v. 8 would end with an adverb instead of the verb, as is the case in the other verses in this series. (3) It involves two words for love in v. 8. (4) It deprives v. 9 of a word for love, thus disrupting the series 8-10. Besides this, there are patristic texts, for example Cyprian, *domin. orat.* 15 and the Leonine Sacramentary (XXX.1104, Mohlberg) on the Consecration of Virgins, which yoke these two words: *amor* and *timeo*.

On the other hand, there are reasons for preferring the older punctuation that places *amore* with v. 8. (1) This would be in closer harmony with 1 Peter 2:17, which seems to lie behind these verses. (2) Caesarius of Arles does use the pair *casto amore* (*Testamentum,* 286). Yet ms Sankt Gallen 914 has *caste,* which cannot modify *amore*. (3) 72.10 also has two mentions of love, and it may be an inclusion with 72.8. Nonetheless, the reasons for adopting the new reading seem convincing. See Lentini, 642.

fear (timeant) of the Lord is a major theme in Benedict's Rule; in fact, I have argued (4.84-85) that it may well be *the* central theological concept in the whole Rule. Loving fear is, of course, not an ordinary idea, but Cassian talks about the "fear of lovers" in *conf.* 11.13: they dread the thought of saddening or hurting the beloved. Furthermore, the Bible itself does not hesitate to associate love and fear. Thus Deuteronomy 10:12: "Fear the Lord . . . love the Lord." See *Index:* Fear.

While RB 7.67 insists that "perfect love casts out fear," and RB 72 is all about love, it is noteworthy that fear still makes its appearance in this chapter. That is because a certain kind of fear, namely, awesome reverence, is an indispensable component of all authentic religious experience. See Kardong, 3.83-85; 8.42.

10.

This is the only maxim of RB 72 that is specifically monastic: like RB 4, the chapter consists of general Christian aphorisms. Yet these are the highest ideals of the Christian life, so there is no sense of watering down the monastic enterprise.

their abbot (suum abbatem) has a possessive tone, as well it might, for the monks have elected the abbot and he belongs to them as to no one else. The thing is often turned around, with an abbot talking about "my monks," but that is not as happy a phrase. Of course, there is a fine line between claiming the abbot as the one God has given us, and thinking of him as somehow beholden to our wishes. Too often a community elects a person without ever fully *accepting* him as its abbot. See *Index:* Abbot.

love . . . charity (caritate diligant). We have seen (note 72.8) that Benedict does not seem to make fine distinctions between the various words for love. Still, it may not be accidental that he uses the same word *caritas* for both the brethren and the abbot in 72.8 and 10. Secondly, this New Testament word is based on the divine love, the fruit of Christ's sacrificial death for us. It is not based on emotional states: no one can command that kind of love, but we are bound by the gospel to extend charity to one another.

The love between the monks and abbot is something that Benedict did not learn from the Master. Nothing about the abbot in that Rule is lovable, and the monks are never told to love him. They are, however, told to fear him (RM 7.64; 11.6; 89.20), a thing that Benedict never asks for. Instead RB 64.15 advises the abbot to prefer to be "loved rather than feared."

Not all superiors have the personal characteristics that inspire affection in their subjects. Nevertheless, a word like *diligere* does have the connotation of "holding dear," which is incompatible with a purely legalistic or power relationship. The Benedictine abbot has always been seen in a more familial light than have the superiors of most modern congregations. Still, it is not helpful to impose concepts from the biological family on the monastic "family."

sincere and humble (sincera et humili). Since the abbot has power over the monk, there may be a temptation to feign good will where none is felt. On the other hand, where there is genuine affection there may be a corresponding lack of reverence for the office of the abbot. Chumminess with the abbot is not a healthy thing for the monk or the rest of the community. Yet this ought not rule out the possibility of a monk relating to his abbot in terms of true friendship. It is a sad thing when an abbot feels he can no longer have friends within the community.

11.

This verse is a verbatim quote of Cyprian, *domin. orat.* 15. The rest of Cyprian's statement is worth noting: "for he has preferred nothing to us." This apparently vague reference to Christ is in fact a specific patristic way of speaking of the death of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world. Hence, our preference for Christ is based on the foundational events of the Christian faith. Again, it is not simply a matter of affection for Christ but of gratitude for what he has done for us: given us new life through his death. The same quote appeared in 4.21, but here at the end of the Rule it may be understood in a deeper fashion and as the fruit of a lifetime of Christian experience on the part of Benedict. At any rate, it is apparent that this verse is simply a variant on the theme of love: love Christ as he has loved us. This rather austere way of speaking of love for Christ is fully in keeping with the general Christology of Benedict, who tells us little or nothing about the earthly Jesus. Rather, he presents the awesome risen Lord who is present in the least of those we encounter. Hence, to "prefer nothing" to this Christ is to adore him in the weak and powerless. See *Index:* Christ.

12.

lead us (perducat). The prefix *per* gives this verb a quality of thor-

oughness: to lead all the way to some goal. We have noted that *ducere* also appears in 72.2, so *perducere* can be understood as an inclusion. But this is an incremental inclusion: Good zeal will lead us to God, but Christ will *really* lead us all the way to God. And from this point of view, Christ himself is the good zeal that leads us to salvation. Finally, it is noteworthy that the Rule ends on a dynamic note. The image here is that of pilgrimage. The Benedictine community should not be seen as a static refuge, but rather as a column of Christians on the road toward God. Christ is the pilgrimage leader, and of course the abbot fulfills the Christ-role in our midst. See Kardong, 1.56-64.

The eschatological completeness of this verse makes it look very much like a finale. Perhaps it functioned at one time as the closing prayer of the entire Rule. In this way, it stands like 66.8 as a testament to an earlier edition of the Rule. Even in the present form, it is likely that RB 73 is an epilogue to the main body of the Rule, which really ends at 72.12.

all together (pariter) is not a meaningless word but rather one of those very significant adverbs that are the driving force of RB 72. Larmann, 2.153-165, has shown that the word was virtually invisible to earlier translators (he was the translator of RB 72 for *RB 1980*). This is an excellent example of how much presuppositions affect scholarly work: because the idea of a communal heavenly journey and even heavenly existence was so far from the individualistic spirituality of the translators, they missed the importance of *pariter.* While it is true that the unusual word *pariter* can have the weak sense of "likewise," it is not likely that Benedict would use it that way in the final verse of his Rule. Rather, he takes this opportunity to make a tremendous statement about the cenobitic life: it not only pertains to this side of the grave but perdures forever.

everlasting life (vitam aeternam) repeats 72.2 to form a frame; but now the theology is slightly different, for Christ and not good zeal is the subject. Given his very high Christology, Benedict would not like to have Christ leading us "to God." The idea here is rather of Christ carrying us in himself to the heavenly realm. This reminds us of New Testament passages such as 2 Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

eternal (aeternam). It is fitting that the Holy Rule end on the words "eternal life," for it is a thoroughly eschatological document. Although the Rule does not pursue a rigorously otherworldly eschatology like the Master does (see note for Prol 49), nevertheless the theme of eternity is

frequently invoked as the basic motivation of all the monk does (4.46; 5.3,10; 7.11; 72.2,12).

life (vitam) is a favorite word of Benedict, appearing thirty-one times in the Rule. Most of these are neutral usages, and refer to ordinary existence on earth, but sometimes it is a question of eternal life. Probably the most significant instance would be Prol 15, where the prospective monk is offered "life" if he is willing to take up the monastic quest. Now that the Rule has come to its conclusion, Benedict speaks of the reward of eternal life for the monk who has been faithful to the commitment he once undertook. See *Index:* Life.

RB 72 Overview

Since this chapter is probably the real finale of the Rule (see note 72.12), it is no wonder that commentators often have a great deal to say about it. Also, it is arguably the most communal of all Benedict's chapters, so those scholars who are most interested in this aspect of Benedictine life will tend to expand their analysis of this chapter. Finally, RB 72 is of its very nature susceptible to scholarly exegesis because it is both lapidary and dense in its form. Therefore, it can be analyzed and unpacked with great profit.

A. The Literary Form of RB 72

Böckmann, 9.14-18, has made a careful survey of the literary qualities of this chapter. She concludes that it is a very careful composition. Apparently Benedict did not want to end his Rule in an offhanded or careless fashion. Thus vv. 1-2 state a general principle and they do so in a rather formal, architectonic way that employs parallelism, antithesis and inclusion. Verse 3 is a transition from zeal to love. Verses 4-8 are a kind of prose-poem that rings the changes of love; it features five verses that begin with a keyword and end with a verb. Verses 9-11 provide a solid foundation for the cenobitic love enterprise: God; abbot; Christ.

Böckmann goes on to point out the way that Benedict uses language to effect his purpose. The chapter is exhortatory, intending to uplift and energize the monks in the ways of love. To do this, he employs warm language such as superlatives, multiple words for love itself and frequent references to mutuality. Of course, the statement on zeal is highly effective in setting the thermostat for this chapter at a very high point.

Wathen, 2.41-66, concentrates on the literary sources of RB 72. His analysis suggests that Ambrose, *expos. de Psalm.* CXVII.18, is an influence, and the interesting thing is that this same source appears to lie behind some parts of RB 71, indicating that these two chapters were in-

frequently invoked as the basic motivation of all the monk does (4.46; 5.3,10; 7.11; 72.2,12).

life (vitam) is a favorite word of Benedict, appearing thirty-one times in the Rule. Most of these are neutral usages, and refer to ordinary existence on earth, but sometimes it is a question of eternal life. Probably the most significant instance would be Prol 15, where the prospective monk is offered "life" if he is willing to take up the monastic quest. Now that the Rule has come to its conclusion, Benedict speaks of the reward of eternal life for the monk who has been faithful to the commitment he once undertook. See *Index:* Life.

RB 72 Overview

Since this chapter is probably the real finale of the Rule (see note 72.12), it is no wonder that commentators often have a great deal to say about it. Also, it is arguably the most communal of all Benedict's chapters, so those scholars who are most interested in this aspect of Benedictine life will tend to expand their analysis of this chapter. Finally, RB 72 is of its very nature susceptible to scholarly exegesis because it is both lapidary and dense in its form. Therefore, it can be analyzed and unpacked with great profit.

A. The Literary Form of RB 72

Böckmann, 9.14-18, has made a careful survey of the literary qualities of this chapter. She concludes that it is a very careful composition. Apparently Benedict did not want to end his Rule in an offhanded or careless fashion. Thus vv. 1-2 state a general principle and they do so in a rather formal, architectonic way that employs parallelism, antithesis and inclusion. Verse 3 is a transition from zeal to love. Verses 4-8 are a kind of prose-poem that rings the changes of love; it features five verses that begin with a keyword and end with a verb. Verses 9-11 provide a solid foundation for the cenobitic love enterprise: God; abbot; Christ.

Böckmann goes on to point out the way that Benedict uses language to effect his purpose. The chapter is exhortatory, intending to uplift and energize the monks in the ways of love. To do this, he employs warm language such as superlatives, multiple words for love itself and frequent references to mutuality. Of course, the statement on zeal is highly effective in setting the thermostat for this chapter at a very high point.

Wathen, 2.41-66, concentrates on the literary sources of RB 72. His analysis suggests that Ambrose, *expos. de Psalm.* CXVII.18, is an influence, and the interesting thing is that this same source appears to lie behind some parts of RB 71, indicating that these two chapters were in-

deed written as a unit. That, of course, tends to contradict my reading of RB 71 as a failed attempt at discussing mutual obedience, which RB 72 does with great success (see notes for 71.1-3).

Wathen also claims to see allusions to *1 Clement ad Cor.* throughout RB 71–73. These go quite beyond chapter 9 of *Clement,* which I stress as the background of bad and good zeal (see notes for 72.1-2). Furthermore, Wathen is able to point to a number of places where Clement urges humble, mutual obedience. So there is little doubt that this very popular treatise from the first Christian century has had an effect on Benedict.

Wathen's main point in this detailed and provocative essay is to insist that RB 72, far from being the anomaly that some claim it is, is in fact a summation of themes that run throughout the entire Rule. Even though it emphasizes community more than almost any other chapter of the Rule, its theological themes (Christ, fear of God, patience, etc.) are found all over the RB. What is more, this summary is not dominated by Cassian and the Master, but depends on a much broader range of patristic sources. This might serve as a warning to those who tend to use those two authors as the exclusive optic through which to view Benedict's Rule.

B. The Theology of RB 72

Manning, 3.190-192, is also highly appreciative of RB 72. In his mind, the chapter is really the high point of the whole document and a lens through which the rest of the Rule should be read. For example, he says that RB 5, which emphasizes obedience to the abbot, must not be read apart from 71.1-2 and 72.6 on mutual obedience. Only in this way can we maintain the communal thrust of the Rule. Since Benedict is writing for cenobites (1.12), Manning has good reason to claim this. A problem, of course, is that RB 72 only occurs at the end of the document, so we must virtually learn to read the Rule backwards!

Manning's analysis of this chapter mostly concerns the theological logic of the argument. For him, vv. 1-8 are essentially horizontal in their thrust: 1-2: Bad and good zeal (statement of fact); 3: Choose the good zeal = love; 4-8: The loving attitude in practice: mutual respect, mutual support, mutual obedience and altruism. In vv. 9-11, attention is turned to the vertical dimension: love for God, abbot, Christ. Finally, v. 12 summarizes and amalgamates these two "crossbars" into the synthetic image of Christ leading the community to eternal life.

Manning makes a very strong statement on the absolute centrality of community life for the Rule. He says that RB 72.12 shows that it is in no way temporary, nor is it ancillary to the eremitical life. Moreover, in his opinion one cannot claim that cenobitic life has any further earthly

purpose than itself. When celibate persons gather together in a locally stable community under a Rule and an abbot, any specific byproduct of that common life is secondary. As long as the cenobitic framework is maintained, the Holy Spirit can blow through it to produce varied works such as scholarship, contemplation, mission or artistic production.

C. Two Studies of A. Borias on RB 72

Borias has devoted much study to RB 72 and this deserves to be described here due to its excellence. That Borias has written extensively on RB 72 is completely in character with his tendency to emphasize the communal aspects of Benedict's Rule. For an overview of his work, see Kardong, 2.179-220.

In a full-length study, 18.218-238, Borias compares RB 72 with RB 7 on humility. The comparison is somewhat natural since RB 7 closes with the claim that the ladder of humility ought to lead from fear to love. Since RB 72 is all about love, it is reasonable to say that this late chapter takes up where RB 7 leaves off (Böckmann, 9.16). It is another example of lifting a theme from the first part of RB to a higher plane.

The styles of the two chapters are admittedly quite diverse. RB 7 is an extremely diffuse and sprawling creation, with the first step of humility in particular marked by a good deal of repetition and an endless series of biblical proof-texts. RB 72, on the other hand, is very laconic in its expression. Indeed, it is basically a series of aphorisms, that most compact of rhetorical forms. On the other hand, both chapters begin in a similar fashion by setting the monk before the ultimate choice of life and death. If one wishes to obtain life, then one will climb the ladder of humility (7.1); likewise, one will prefer the good to the bad zeal by taking on the attitudes and practices of love (72.3ff.).

The primary symbol of RB 7, however, is very different than that of RB 72. In the chapter on humility one climbs a ladder the steps of which are the various degrees of that virtue. Now, on an ordinary ladder there is only room for one person and that is a good indicator that RB 7 is aimed primarily at the individual and not the community. True, the eighth step (7.55) binds the monk to the common rule of the monastery, but other than that there is not much of a cenobitic dimension to the chapter.

On the other hand, RB 72 is almost entirely communitarian in its interests. In particular vv. 4-8 are devoted to the mutual relations between the members of the community and are marked by characteristic vocabulary like *se invicem* (72.4: see note). What is more, the verbs in RB 72 are almost all plural in number; this is strictly a cenobitic ethic. In line with this tendency to see life in terms of reciprocal human relations is an allocentric outlook that permeates this whole chapter. In RB 72 one

is encouraged to look outward toward the needs of others; RB 7 is much more brooding and introspective in its concerns.

We noted above that whereas RB 7 presents the life of monastic humility as one that leads from fear to love, RB 72 has no such progression from one virtue to another. True, this chapter begins with zeal, but we soon learn that it is just another way of speaking about love. Moreover, love turns out to be the abiding theme all through the chapter to the end. It is really a paean to love, much in the same vein as 1 Corinthians 13.

Finally, Borias notes that both chapters only mention Christ at the very end. But this apparent similarity is actually illusory. RB 7 says that humility will eventually mature from fear of hell to love for Christ. Christ is mentioned in step three (obedient unto death: 7.34), but he is mostly kept for the end. That is not at all the case in RB 72. Even though only the last two verses mention Christ explicitly, there is a clever inclusion which makes one hark back to 72.2: good zeal leads to eternal life. Now Christ leads to eternal life. It is clear enough that good zeal is really Christ's love, which is the driving force of every verse of this beautiful chapter (Böckmann, 37).

Since the theme of Christian altruism is so central to Pauline thinking, Borias, 20.17-26, wonders why no other Rule besides that of Benedict has picked up on the idea. Certainly the Master has nothing comparable to it. This is evident from the way Vogüé, 3.480-481, treats the verse in his rather sketchy notes on this chapter. He remarks that when Benedict says that a monk should judge what is better for another, he is really contradicting RB 5.12 which forbids him to judge anything! That, of course, was an idea that Benedict copied from RM 7.48. But while we can say that the Master systematically carried out this inhuman program by allowing his monks no initiative at all, the same is certainly not true for Benedict. RB 68 is only one example of a case where monks are permitted to exercise judgment of their own.

But how does Vogüé then explain RB 72.7? In the same way he explains the rest of the chapter. To him it is like those Pauline exhortations to charity (e.g., 1 Cor 13:5) which he considers rather vague and imprecise in tone. Therefore, its verses should not be pressed too hard for specific ethical content. For Vogüé, it is essentially an emotional exhortation to mutual charity. For the actual concrete living arrangements of the Rule, one must look elsewhere—to RB 5, for example. A glance at my exegetical notes to this chapter, or at the articles of Wathen, Böckmann or Borias, will show that we do not share this opinion.

To return to the question of what other monastic authors have made of the New Testament demand for altruism, Borias surveys a number of texts but finds very little that applies. For example, in *reg. serv.* 5.5, Augustine quotes 1 Corinthians 13:5, but uses it to show that the

community comes before the individual. That does not mean that Augustine was unaware of Paul's ethic of selflessness; yet for some reason he does not invoke it in his very communitarian monastic Rule. Another remarkable example is the Rule of Ferriolus, which manages to quote 1 Corinthians 13:4 and 8, but not 5.

At any rate, Borias concludes with the comment that not only does Benedict fearlessly invoke the Pauline ethic of altruism at the end of his Rule. Indeed, that allocentric attitude is based on a sensitivity to others that is taught in many chapters of RB. Certainly Benedict's cellarer is a model of empathy for the needs of others, but the same sensitivity is inculcated in RB 36.1-5; 53.3-5 and 66.4. True, the last two texts speak about the needs of noncommunity members, but again and again Benedict urges the abbot to take into account the real needs of his monks (e.g., help for workers who need it: 31.17; 35.4; 53.18).

LXXIII: DE HOC QUOD NON OMNIS IUSTITIAE OBSERVATIO IN HAC SIT REGULA CONSTITUTA

[1]Regulam autem hanc descripsimus, ut hanc observantes in monasteriis aliquatenus vel honestatem morum aut initium conversationis nos demonstremus habere. [2]Ceterum ad perfectionem conversationis qui festinat, sunt doctrinae sanctorum patrum, quarum observatio perducat hominem ad celsitudinem perfectionis. [3]Quae enim pagina aut qui sermo divinae auctoritatis veteris ac novi testamenti non est rectissima norma vitae humanae? [4]Aut quis liber sanctorum catholicorum patrum hoc non resonat ut recto cursu perveniamus ad creatorem nostrum? [5]Necnon et Collationes Patrum et Instituta et Vitas eorum, sed et Regula sancti patris nostri Basilii, [6]quid aliud sunt nisi bene viventium et oboedientium monachorum instrumenta virtutum? [7]Nobis autem desidiosis et male viventibus atque neglegentibus rubor confusionis est.

[8]Quisquis ergo ad patriam caelestem festinas, hanc minimam inchoationis regulam descriptam, adiuvante Christo, perfice, [9]et tunc demum ad maiora quae supra commemoravimus doctrinae virtutumque culmina, Deo protegente, pervenies. Amen.

RB 73: THAT THE WHOLE FULFILLMENT OF JUSTICE IS NOT LAID DOWN IN THIS RULE

1. We have sketched out this Rule, so that carrying it out in monasteries we may at least show that we have moral decency and the rudi-

community comes before the individual. That does not mean that Augustine was unaware of Paul's ethic of selflessness; yet for some reason he does not invoke it in his very communitarian monastic Rule. Another remarkable example is the Rule of Ferriolus, which manages to quote 1 Corinthians 13:4 and 8, but not 5.

At any rate, Borias concludes with the comment that not only does Benedict fearlessly invoke the Pauline ethic of altruism at the end of his Rule. Indeed, that allocentric attitude is based on a sensitivity to others that is taught in many chapters of RB. Certainly Benedict's cellarer is a model of empathy for the needs of others, but the same sensitivity is inculcated in RB 36.1-5; 53.3-5 and 66.4. True, the last two texts speak about the needs of noncommunity members, but again and again Benedict urges the abbot to take into account the real needs of his monks (e.g., help for workers who need it: 31.17; 35.4; 53.18).

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RB 73: THAT THE WHOLE FULFILLMENT OF JUSTICE IS NOT LAID DOWN IN THIS RULE

1. We have sketched out this Rule, so that carrying it out in monasteries we may at least show that we have moral decency and the rudi-

ments of a monastic life. 2. But for someone who is in a hurry to reach the fullness of monastic life, there are the teachings of the Holy Fathers. Anyone who carries them out will arrive at the pinnacle of perfection. 3. For what page or even what word of the divinely inspired Old and New Testaments is not a completely reliable guidepost for human life? 4. Or what book of the holy Catholic Fathers does not teach us how to reach our Creator by the direct route? 5. And then there are the *Conferences* of the Fathers and their *Institutes* and *Lives,* along with the Rule of our holy Father Basil. 6. What else are they for monks who live upright and obedient lives but tools of virtue? 7. But for us lazy monks who lead bad and negligent lives, it is a source of embarrassment and shame.

8. Therefore, if you long to attain the heavenly homeland, with Christ's assistance carry out this modest Rule for beginners that we have sketched out. 9. Only then will you arrive with God's protection at the higher peaks of doctrine and virtue that we have pointed out. Amen.

RB 73 Notes

T

The title of RB 73 is one of the most interesting in the Rule, but because it so closely mimics the first verse, Vogüé, 2.672, considers it secondary.

whole fulfillment of justice (omnis justitiae observatio). An alternative translation would be "the fulfillment of all justice." The second rendition would follow the pattern of Matthew 3:15, which speaks of the "fulfillment of all justice." I have chosen the first construction because it seems more natural and better parallels v. 1, but I have used the term "fulfill" instead of "observe" in order to keep the Matthean flavor.

justice (justitiae). When Benedict speaks of justice, he is usually quoting Matthew (or the Psalms). Further, he seems to have at least an instinctive understanding that by justice, Matthew does not mean abstract or ethical right, but rather covenant relationship. See Kardong, 16.51-62; see *Index:* Justice; Overview, C.

Since RB 73.1 seems to begin as RB 66.8 left off (see notes for both verses), it is likely that it once followed that chapter on the porter. With the insertion of RB 67–72, RB 73 remains the epilogue but now it follows different material. We know that this epilogue tended to float freely, since Benedict of Aniane placed it right after the prologue in his *Concordia Regularum* (PL 103.393-1440). Thus RB 72 and 73 are only juxtaposed by "accident."

laid down (constituta) is reminiscent of Prol 45 and 46 where the term is used twice. Moreover, the epilogue picks up on the theme of spiritual progress that was introduced at the end of the Prologue (46–49). This is significant, since those verses are a creation of Benedict himself and not the Master. The vocabulary of both Prol 46–49 and RB 73 has numerous linguistic ties to John Cassian (see Kardong, 7.234-240). On the relationship between the prologue and epilogue, see Vogüé, 4.103-118. For the implications of the close fit between Prol 46–49 and RB 73, see Overview, C, end.

1.
As for this Rule (Regulam autem hanc) neatly dovetails with *Hanc autem regulam* in 66.8. Since that verse is considered by many to be the ending of an earlier stage of the Rule, the epilogue may have been written to follow it. See Penco, 2.25-42. In contrast to the theme that will be developed in RB 73, RB 1.2 presents a Rule as an absolutely indispensable element of cenobitic life. Due to lack of a Rule and an abbot, both sarabaites and gyrovagues go to ruin. See *Index:* Rule.

Lentini, 647, and Böckmann, 7.106, think that *autem* here is to be taken as a strong adversative. For them it is a transition from RB 72, which teaches the loftiest ideals of mutual love. That is an arguable position, but the ideal of RB 73 is not love but rarified contemplation. See note on *perfectio,* 73.2.

we have sketched out (descripsimus) is the authorial plural, but the last part of the verse will use the true plural *(nos demonstremus).* I have followed Lentini on "sketched" instead of "written," convinced by his argument that this verb is really part of the theme of authorial humility. Vogüé, 4.108, thinks the verb may show that Benedict was aware that his work was derivative. If that is the case, the translation would be "copied," but Vogüé, 2.673, still translates it as "written." The same word is repeated in RB 73.8. Böckmann, 7.107, thinks the first person plural of "we may show" is a tie to RB 72.12.

monasteries (monasteriis) suggests that the Rule was meant for more than one community. Although there are other subtle hints at this (see 18.22; 62.1), there is no justification for seeing Benedict as the architect of a great monastic movement. In fact, for centuries after its creation, this Rule was known and followed in only a few monasteries in Italy and France. See C. Peifer, *RB 1980,* 113–120; see *Index:* Monastery.

moral decency (honestatem morum) seems to be the first hint of a major theme in this chapter, namely, that the observance of the Rule is only a beginning to a fully developed monastic life. Yet the research of

M. Rothenhäusler, 127–146, suggests that *honestas morum* did not mean merely minimal morality for the classical and patristic writers. Rather, it points to all that befits the nature of the human person (Böckmann, 7.107).

Holzherr, 332, thinks that "moral decency" refers to the "practical" (ascetical) task that must be undertaken before any "theoretic" (contemplative) life is possible. These are Origenist categories that may be heuristic, but cannot be applied to Benedict without reservation.

rudiments of monastic life (initium conversationis). Both words appear in the Prologue: the beginning *(initio)* of the monastic life must needs be narrow (48) and the life itself is called *conversatio* in Prol 49. It should be noted, however, that although Prol 46–49 also teaches the need for a dynamic monastic spirituality of growth, it does not say that life according to the Rule is a bare minimum. In fact, it points to love as the fullness of monastic life—just as is taught in RB 72. See Kardong, 7.234-240. *Initium conversationis* is found in Cassian, *inst.* 4.39,1; *conf.* 21.10,1. See also *vit. patr.* 5.11,29; *hist. mon.* 31. The basic meaning of *conversatio* is "lifestyle," that is, the external aspects of any particular walk of life. That sense works well here, since the verse seems to be talking about "monastic practices." See *Index:* Conversatio.

Holzherr, 331, notes that Benedict's vocabulary of the "beginning," "course" *(processus)* and "end" suggests the Alexandrian ascent spirituality. There is no question that Benedict teaches a dynamic model of the spiritual life, but one wonders if he is as dependent on Cassian as Holzherr thinks.

There is a paradox running through this chapter in that ordinary monastic life is described as a mere "beginning." To most people, monasticism is seen as a very advanced form of Christian life, but the monk realizes that he has only just begun. A genuine sense of oneself as a mere neophyte is absolutely indispensable to any spiritual growth and an infallible sign of health.

If we read Benedict's *initium conversationis* in Cassianic terms as the first stage of a process, then we should remember that those stages are quite fluid in the thought of the patristic writer. In practical terms, no matter how advanced one may become in contemplation, there is no time when the Rule no longer applies to the cenobite.

2.

in a hurry (festinat). This is Cassianic language (see *conf.* 21.5,4), but it is also characteristic of Benedict, who often speaks of hurrying to do the will of God. The verb not only connotes physical speed but an *eagerness*

to reach the goal. See Kardong, 6.163. The term also recurs in 73.8 where it forms an inclusion along with several other words which are repeated in the first and last lines of this chapter. See *Index:* Alacrity, Run.

fullness (perfectionem). There are two basic meanings of *perfectio:* fullness and perfection. The first refers to completion and the second has to do with an absence of flaws. Although Cassian probably puts more emphasis on the second element, in the context of the monastic journey or ascent in RB 73 arrival or fullness seems indicated.

for someone (qui) should probably be *cui*. Most commentators consider this a grammatical lapse. This offer to "anyone" shows that the "perfection" spoken of here is not restricted to an elite but is open to everyone (Böckmann, 7.110). The term *hominem* (anyone) in the second part of the verse has the same universal connotation.

perfection (perfectionis). The second usage of *perfectio* in v. 2 is a bit different than the first (fullness). The image of the journey or climb is basically the same, yet the image of a climb to the "pinnacle of perfection" can have overtones of elitism and spiritual snobbery. The positive side of this image is the dynamism that it lends to the spiritual quest. See Couilleau, 12.1082-1118.

The term "perfection" is not frequent in the New Testament, but it does appear in an important text in Matthew: "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48). That astonishing teaching has caused much puzzlement, but at least one thing is certain: the "perfection" of God in the Sermon on the Mount has less to do with freedom from flaws than it does with all-inclusive love. Thus Matthew 5:45 tells of a God who "lets his sun shine on both the good and bad." That, however, does not seem to be the spirit of RB 73.

pinnacle (celsitudinem). Cassian's usual term is *culmen perfectionis* (*inst.* 4.8; 5.28; 7.13; *conf.* 1, praef.; 2.4,24; 3.22; 9.2,3; 9.7,4; 10.8,4; 21.33,1); Vogüé, 2.672, says that *celsitudo* is equivalent to *culmen* in Cassian (*conf.* 20.3).

Holy Fathers (sanctorum Patrum). Rather than a reference to particular texts or authors, as in the subsequent verses, this seems to be a general reference to the "Golden Age" of spirituality and monasticism that was presumed to have gone before. The theme of the "good old days" was already present with the earliest Pachomian monks (*lib. Hors*. 50) and it is a standard refrain throughout monastic history.

If we take "holy Fathers" here as the patristic writers, then it seems that they frame the Bible (v. 3), for they are also mentioned in v. 4. Thus the Bible must be read in accord with Church interpretation (Böckmann,

112). But it is also possible to include the Bible in the expression "holy Fathers." See *Index:* Father.

3.

what word (qui sermo). *RB 1980* has "what passage," but the sense seems to suggest "word." At least that is the consensus of the translators. It is probably safe to say that most modern monks do *not* treasure every page of the Bible. For us, there are whole parts of the Bible that are virtually impenetrable, not because of their content but due to their form. Thus the genealogies and the elaborate details of Leviticus or Numbers seem utterly barren to us. But to the early Christians they were a challenge: how to find Christ in such unpromising material? Although the patristic commentaries sometimes seem fanciful or capricious, they often achieve deep spiritual penetration into the meaning of the text. This may come about by intuitive methods unacceptable to modern exegetes, but the results are still impressive.

divinely inspired (divinae auctoritatis), literally, "of divine authority." I would have preferred some other rendition but could not find one that was both more accurate and still graceful. The use of successive interrogatives in verses 3-6 is unusual with Benedict, but reminiscent of the Prologue (12,15,19,23,37). In both cases, rhetorical questions increase the verbal energy and tend to stimulate the hearer. They also may show that the hearers are familiar with the answers.

Old and New Testaments (veteris ac novi testamenti). By his own use of the Bible, Benedict demonstrates considerable familiarity with the biblical text. He requires biblical culture from both the abbot (2.4) and the deans (21.4), which is also the natural result of the faithful and assiduous practice of *lectio divina* by every monk. See *Index:* Lectio Divina, Scripture.

Böckmann, 7.114, shrewdly remarks that in an age of heresy, by which she means the sixth century, it was important to maintain a very broad biblical base and not put all one's weight on one book or a few passages (as did Marcion).

completely reliable guidepost (rectissima norma), literally, a "perfectly straight guideline." The term "guidepost" is used to maintain the image of the journey. The shortest line between two points is "perfectly straight" but that does not imply that the Bible is easy or transparent. Yet, correctly understood, it does infallibly teach salvation.

4.

holy Catholic Fathers (sanctorum catholicorum Patrum) is probably a reference to orthodox as opposed to heterodox writings. Since Benedict

lived at a time when orthodox Italy was overrun by Arian Goths, he has a certain preoccupation with correct faith (see note 53.2). Coming just after the mention of Scripture, the mention of the Catholic Fathers is tantamount to "tradition" (see the same expression in 9.8). The same phrase can also refer to tried and true spiritual authors as opposed to the latest fad or trend. Benedict is much less open to apocryphal and popular devotional tracts than the Master, who often quotes them. See *Index:* Father.

Lentini, 650, remarks justly that the improved cycle of patristic readings in the Divine Office is one of the finest fruits of the current liturgical reform.

teach us (hoc resonat ut), literally, "loudly proclaims this, that we might. . . ." This awkward circumlocution can either be taken as a summons or a teaching. The ancients mostly encountered patristic literature audially: they heard it read aloud in choir, at table and so on.

reach . . . by the direct route (recto cursu perveniamus). The adverbial phrase is repeated from the previous verse, but now "perfection" becomes "arrival." In both cases the idea is a dynamic spiritual journey directed by authentic Christian teaching.

5.

Now Benedict mentions several monastic sources, which naturally come after Scripture and the Tradition. Nevertheless, this verse is of intense interest as a possible window into Benedict's evaluation of his own mentors. He already mentioned *Conferences* and *Lives* of the Fathers in 42.3 (see note) for evening reading. *Vit. patr. Jur.* 174, has a similar reading list.

Conferences of the Fathers and their Institutes and Lives (Collationes Patrum et Instituta et Vitas eorum). Probably a reference to Cassian and the *Lives* of the Desert Fathers, but see Overview, A. Very likely Benedict does not name Cassian because that monastic Father was under a cloud with the Church authorities from about A.D. 534 onward. See *RB 1980,* 58–59.

their Lives (Vitas eorum). The accusative *Vitas* may have crept in here because Benedict had already used two nouns which can be either nominative or accusative *(collationes et instituta).*

Rule of our holy Father Basil (Regula sancti Patris nostri Basilii). There is little question that the reference is to the Latin version of the Rule of Basil that Benedict knew and used as a source. But the precise import of the title "our holy Father" is harder to determine. See Overview, A. The monks of the Eastern Church have always considered St. Basil their great ancestor but it is doubtful whether Benedict had the same

feeling for the Cappadoccian doctor as they do. Probably Basil did not think he *was* writing a Rule, but simply applying Scripture to monastic life, for the *Regula Basilii* is basically a set of questions and answers.

6.

tools of virtue (instrumenta virtutum) is a Cassianic turn of phrase (*conf*. 6.10,3; 24.24,3). RB 4 is a listing of "tools for good works" (see note for RB 4T), but here the writings of the monastic Fathers are described as tools.

Böckmann, 7.122, says that *virtus* is more a "power" than a "virtue" for Cassian—the movement of the whole person to God in the power of the Holy Spirit. As for *instrumenta,* they are helps that one uses to make progress.

I have kept the Latin word order that puts the tools of virtue last so as to bring out the contrast between this verse and the next one. Most translators seem to lose this point by placing the tools before the mention of good monks (Manning, Schmitz, Steidle, Vogüé, *RB 1980*). Salzburg agrees with me on this.

7.

This verse is a careful composition that mirrors v. 6, but contrasts with it.

lazy . . . negligent (desidiosis . . . negligentibus). The same combination is found in 48.23, where it describes those who cannot or will not do *lectio divina* on Sunday. Here it refers to contemporary monks. Cassian uses the same word combination in *conf*. 12.16,3.

it is a source of embarrassment and shame (rubor confusionis est), literally, a "blush of shame." An English expression is "shamefaced." The subject of the sentence is their inability to live up to the teachings in Scripture and tradition. Benedict laments the tepidity of contemporary monks in 18.25, 40.6 and 49.1. Here, of course, the theme covers the entire chapter, although it is not the main teaching. *Rubor confusionis* is a genitive of identity, with the words equaling and coloring each other. Benedict comes down hard on his contemporaries, but he uses "we" so as to include himself among the decadent (Böckmann, 7.124).

The transition from v. 7 to 8 is rhetorically effective, for just after convicting us of our sloth, he arouses us with exhortation. *Ergo* in the next verse is also full of energy (see notes for Prol 3,8).

8.

Therefore, if . . . you (Quisquis ergo). Since something must be done

with the subordinate clause, I have made it into a conditional. Many translators give more prominence to the indefinite *quisquis:* "Whoever you are." It is important to retain the second person of *festinas,* since Benedict now addresses the reader directly. In this way, the end of the epilogue resembles the beginning of the prologue (*ad te ergo . . . quisquis:* Prol 3).

long (festinas). The same verb is used in 73.2, where it also refers to an attitude of the will more than physical "hastening." Only if the listeners put Benedict's suggestions into practice will they in fact hasten to the spiritual goal. Nevertheless, *festinare* often does refer to physical speed in RB. See *Index:* Alacrity, Run.

heavenly homeland (patriam caelestem), literally, "fatherland." Although "fatherland" is reminiscent of the "loving father" of Prol 1, it is too reminiscent of the Third Reich to be used in a modern translation. Prol 2 definitely speaks of heaven when it talks about a "return to him from whom you drifted by the inertia of disobedience." Hebrews 11:14 uses the same terms in connection with the theme of the Christian as a wayfarer.

with Christ's assistance (adjuvante Christo). Christ is also mentioned in Prol 3, and divine assistance is invoked in Prol 4. Thus Christ is placed as a frame around the entire Rule, as well as all throughout the body of the document. In Prol 4 the divine help is said to complete what has been begun by the monk. In 73.8, the keeping of the Rule itself is the beginning of the process of monastic perfection. The vocabulary here is reminiscent of Cassian's favorite prayer (*conf.* 9–10): *Domine, ad adjuvandum me, festina* (Lord, come to my aid!).

this modest Rule for beginners (hanc minimam inchoationis regulam), literally, "of beginning." Salzburg has "take this little Rule as a beginning." It is surely no accident that Prol 4 also uses the term *inchoas* for the human beginning of a work. Though the point is a little different, the language constitutes a clear inclusion with Benedict's distinctive opening verses of the Prologue. Böckmann, 7.127, thinks that Benedict calls his Rule a "little beginning" so as to encourage the faint-hearted. But if that is the case, then the epilogue is addressed to newcomers. See *Index:* Rule; Overview, C.

that we have sketched out (descriptam). See note 73.1.

9.

Only then (tunc demum). It is hard to estimate the precise flavor of these connective adverbs. Although *demum* seems rather strong, most translators have only "then" (but Vogüé has "only"). It seems unlikely

that the author is emphasizing the Rule as a *necessary* preliminary to the higher pursuits. Cassian ends his preface to the *Conferences* with a sentence beginning with the unusual word *demum*.

you will arrive (pervenies) is a particularly appropriate word to end the document, since it means to reach one's goal. RB 72.12 ended on a similar note (*perducat* = will lead us all the way). *RB 1980,* perhaps reflecting the difficulty of rendering *tunc demum* (previous note) has two verbs: "you can set out" and "you will reach."

that we have pointed out (supra commemoravimus) that is, Scripture and tradition as described earlier in the chapter.

higher peaks of doctrine and virtue (maiora . . . doctrinae virtutum culmina) continues the theme of journeying or climbing toward a goal. Cassian loves to speak of *culmina*: of doctrine (*conf.* 21.34,3) or of virtue (*inst.* 4.23; *conf.* 18.15; 22.7). Thus this very Cassianic chapter ends with language redolent of that monastic writer. Like Cassian, Benedict holds out the hope of these spiritual heights in this life and not just in heaven (see Overview, D).

Borias, 10.267, notes that RB 73.8-9 has no less than four parallels with 73.1-2, making it an unquestionable inclusion. Still, vv. 8-9 do make some changes in vv. 1-2, omitting the communal references and replacing human effort with divine aid. Note the multiple instances of words with the *per* prefix in 73.1-2 and 8-9, indicating the completion of the monastic journey.

with God's protection (deo protegente). If the image of mountain climbing is meant, perhaps God is presented as an alpine guide. It would not be hard to connect that image with some of the dangers that lurk in the "higher" reaches of the spiritual doctrine of Cassian. At any rate, this ablative absolute is a parallel to *adjuvante Christo* in the previous verse. The repetition of the need for divine assistance is a good way to end a monastic Rule, for it is all too easy to concentrate on the human struggle involved in asceticism and forget the primary role of God in all of this. What is more, all the way to God is *with* God.

As Holzherr, 335, points out, the Rule is not a closed system. Since Benedict points to higher realms beyond mere observance of the Rule, this has the effect of making the system open-ended. From the standpoint of the institution, it may seem threatening, but the spiritual life must be as free as the Spirit, who "blows where she wills." The same function of the Spirit is explicitly acknowledged in 7.70.

RB 73 Overview

Because of its position, its doctrine and its complexity, RB 73 is of exceptional interest to both the scholar and the ordinary reader. It is generally considered an epilogue, not part of the main text but a separate summary (Vogüé, 4.95-114). Of course, its general message is to encourage the monk to avoid complacency and to seek to make continual progress toward God. That is what we would expect at the end of a monastic Rule, for the call for growth is something that resonates with the modern mentality. We find a dynamic spirituality more congenial and helpful than the more static models that we find in many traditional texts. We have been able to point to many instances of this dynamic spirituality throughout the Rule of Benedict (see notes for Prol 48–49; 5.8; 27.5; 43.1; 73.2).

Yet this theme of continual growth in RB 73 is couched in ambiguous or at least somewhat puzzling terms. In order to send us forward, Benedict tells us to go beyond his Rule to the higher elevations described and prescribed in the Bible and the Tradition. This leaves us wondering why the Rule itself should be treated as a mere preliminary step in the monastic life. And we need to find out more precisely what texts of the Bible and the Tradition are supposed to lead us to the heights. We will deal with these questions in reverse order.

A. Sources in RB 73

In this section we are dealing not so much with the sources *of* RB 73 as with the list of authoritative reading materials *(lectio divina)* given by the author in 73.3-6. The problem is not with the Bible (v. 3) or with the "holy Catholic Fathers" (v. 4). These categories are so broad and vast that it is not possible to specify much about them until we have dealt with the more difficult verse, namely 73.5. On the surface of it, there seems to be no problem. Everyone knows that "Conferences" and "Institutes" refers to John Cassian, and the reference to "our Holy Father Basil" is straightforward enough. Yet as a matter of fact the interpretation of these verses can and has given rise to some fierce controversies among modern Rule scholars.

Before we explain why, let us make note of the curious fact that Benedict does not mention the Rule of the Master at all! If this is his select reading list, how can he omit the document that he himself used as his primary literary source? Could it be that he knew the text of RM was so obscure that few would have access to it? Or could it be that he is making no attempt here to be taxative? After all, another major source, Augustine, is not mentioned either. At least we might conclude

that this short list is meant to be heuristic rather than definitive on the question of authoritative monastic texts.

Yet it must be admitted that the short list does not look general but quite specific. Thus the reference to "the Rule of our Holy Father Basil" points to a well-known document, that is, the Latin translation of Basil's Greek monastic writings made by Rufinus of Aquileia about A.D. 400. Surely there is nothing here to argue about, since we know that Benedict himself sometimes makes use of this Rule in his own text (e.g., quotes in RB 33T; 48.1 and 55.7).

Yet the great Basil-scholar J. Gribomont complained bitterly shortly before his death, 1.109-143, that the influence of Basil on Benedict had been systematically downplayed by the premier commentator, A. de Vogüé. Gribomont argued that the title "our holy Father" should be taken seriously: Basil is indeed Benedict's chief mentor. Besides discussing all the possible texts of RB where Basilian influence is operating, he expressed his chagrin that the influence of Cassian has been exaggerated out of all proportion.

Vogüé, 15.402-452, was not slow to defend himself from this rather vigorous attack on his lifework as a commentator on RB. He stuck to his contention that "our holy Father" was a common title that the old monks often gave to each other without meaning to indicate special mentorship. He also reexamined each passage of RB where Basilian influence is claimed or alleged, finally reaffirming his preference for John Cassian as the primary spiritual influence on Benedict.

No doubt part of Gribomont's concern was *lèse majesté,* that is, the perception that his great hero Basil was getting short shrift from the most influential scholar of RB. But Gribomont also maintained that the issue was larger, for Basil represents for him cenobitic monasticism and Cassian is the spokesman for the anchorites (1.232-237). Consequently, he said, when we downplay the influence of Basil, we are weakening the communal element in RB.

We cannot pursue a detailed review of this controversy in these pages. Probably the point about "our holy Father" is moot: there are arguments on both sides. But an overall study of Benedict's sources hardly corroborates the claim that Basil is his chief source. Certainly he is no more so than the Master or Augustine or Cassian. Moreover, Gribomont's reading of various "Basilian" texts in RB are often unconvincing. Nevertheless, I agree with him that Cassian has been overestimated as an influence on Benedict and this is especially tempting in RB 73 because Cassianic language is especially detectable in this chapter. See Kardong, 7.235-240.

Another scholar who has taken issue with "pan-Cassianism" in connection with RB 73 is A. Wathen, who agrees with Gribomont that the

cenobitic influences on Benedict have been underappreciated. Wathen's opening salvo came in 1977 with a general study of Benedict's sources (3.101-118). The redoubtable Vogüé was not slow to answer. A year later, 21.275-285, the latter methodically detailed all the places in the RB where Cassianic influence is at work. It is an impressive display and its general solidity is hard to deny.

Nevertheless, Wathen was not satisfied, and in a second article, 6.208-231, he carried the argument to the specific case of RB 73.5 ("RB 73 and Vitas Patrum," CS 19 [1984] 208–231). Basing himself on J. Lienhard's suggestion, 1.230-270, that *Vitas patrum* may refer to the *Life of Pachomius*, Wathen wonders why then everyone immediately assumes that it refers to the *Lives* of the Desert Fathers?

His main point is that the *Life of Pachomius* is a *cenobitic* source and not an anchoritic one. He is also probably right in noting that the collection of stories about the Desert Fathers in Latin by Pelagius probably did not even exist at the time Benedict wrote. Secondly, Wathen is able to point to some verbal resonances between RB 73 and the Prologue to Denis' *Vita Pachomii*. And he then goes on to show that Denis always uses *collationes* and *instituta* as generic terms. There is no question that these words were used to refer to many different writings besides those of John Cassian. But it is also beyond question that Cassian's work was by far the best known—indeed, so well known that everyone knew what was meant when one referred to the "Conferences" and "Institutes."

Whether Wathen is correct that there is no direct reference to Cassian in RB 73.5, and I doubt that he is, at least he does warn us to be a bit more careful in the assumptions we make about Benedict's list of "sources" in RB 73 and the conclusions we draw therefrom. And although I think Wathen is definitely wrong in denying that Cassian is a major influence on Benedict, I agree with him and Gribomont that too many commentators make him virtually the only influence. For example, for all its usefulness, the commentary of G. Holzherr is, in my estimation, too tied to Cassian in chapters like RB 73. That is a temptation because Cassian explains so much and Benedict explains so little.

Perhaps the most convincing treatment of the sources in RB 73 is that of M. Casey, 1.14-24. In his opinion, Benedict's list is most notable for its *balance.* Thus, even if Benedict does refer to Cassian and the Desert Fathers, his clear naming of Basil insures that both the anchorites and the cenobites are well represented. Casey notes that this balance is typical of Benedict, who sometimes treats the same subject from different viewpoints. Thus he complements his harsh theology of the abbot in RB 2 with more pastoral treatises (RB 27 and 64). For another example, see Kardong, 21.200-201.

But Casey puts more emphasis on "the holy Catholic Fathers" (73.4) than on the monastic references in RB 73. To him, openness to the teachings of the Great Church is an important consideration of the epilogue. Rather than looking inward in a spirit of spiritual narcissism, as we might be tempted to do through the theme of "perfection" in RB 73, Casey urges us to look outward. Finally, he thinks that the sequence of RB 73 coming after RB 72 bids us do just that, for the love that is preached in the penultimate chapter is essentially communal and public. While I thoroughly agree that selfless love for the other is a better way to end the Rule than the theme of "perfection," I am convinced that Benedict took the second route.

B. "Justice" in RB 73

As we indicated in the note on 73T, the Matthean theme of "justice" must be dealt with since Benedict alludes to it in the title of this chapter. In general Matthew follows the Jewish understanding of "justice" as covenant relation rather than abstract ethical correctness. In this way he can go beyond the Jewish Law while still using a biblical category. See Kardong, 16.51-62.

Of the four times Benedict quotes Matthean justice texts, RB 73T (Matt 3:15) is the hardest to interpret. This is partly because the Matthean text is itself obscure. In its original context, it seems to mean that by baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist will be indicating that he and Jesus want to live up to the practices of a pious Jewish life (Kardong, 16.57-58). But just after that, in Matthew 5–7, Jesus teaches a new ethic that goes beyond the "justice of the scribes and Pharisees" (5:20) and at other points in his Gospel Matthew indicates that more is needed. Because the observance of these superpious Jews was virtually unsurpassable, we may well wonder how the Christian could be expected to exceed it? The answer lies in the root meaning of *sedekah* (justice), which refers to the covenant relation between Yahweh and his people. Therefore, Christian life must be essentially a life of love with God rather than a mass of observances.

How does this biblical theme get worked out in RB 73, if at all? Certainly there is a common dynamic, since the chapter explicitly states that observance of the Rule itself is not enough; the Rule, like the Law, is to be "fulfilled." If one wishes to rise to great heights of perfection, he says, then our guide must be the Bible and the Fathers. But this seems to beg the question, since we are not told what sort of perfection these sources teach.

If Benedict really is following the influence of Cassian in this chapter, as I think he is, then perfection means contemplation. But this is a

significant departure from the Matthean theology of justice. For Matthew, only love goes beyond the Law. Now Benedict has just taught the primacy of love in RB 72. Can he mean to so quickly supersede that teaching? Of course there is no opposition between contemplation and love, but in his way of ending the Rule, Benedict risks making it look that way. See Kardong, 7.235-240.

C. The Theme of Diffidence

To anyone who has only heard *about* Benedict and his Rule without actually reading the epilogue, it comes as somewhat of a jar to hear him call it a "modest Rule for beginners that I have sketched out" (73.8). After all, isn't this the Rule that everyone praises for its excellence, and the one Western Rule that came to dominate the medieval monastic scene? How then are we to take this disclaimer in the final lines of the document?

Could it be a mere literary conceit, a formality for an author who has, after all, advocated humility (RB 7) as a key value for monks? Probably not, since Benedict displays considerable personal modesty in passages like RB 18.22 and 40.2. Certainly he did not learn this diffidence from the Master, who never expresses the slightest hesitation in regard to his own authoritative stature. Indeed, RM Prol 5 claims to be the very voice of God speaking.

The theme of personal modesty is closely allied with the idea that the level of monastic observance and spirituality has fallen to a low level in one's own time as compared to the Golden Age. Vogüé, 4.103-107, has traced this theme right through from the time of Cassian (*inst.* 2.5; *conf.* 7.23; 19.5) to the sixth century of Benedict. And we can say that it was a regular complaint in the sixth and seventh centuries, when the Western monks could already look back on two or three centuries of monastic life in the East (*vit. patr. Jur.* 2.19; *reg. Pl. et St.* 41; Caesarius, *reg. virg.* 63). So, taken in its historical context Benedict's disclaimer about his "modest Rule for beginners" is not an anomaly.

But we return to the enduring fame of Benedict's Rule, which we believe is well deserved. Has the author been affected by final doubts after erecting this noble edifice? Is he like Thomas Aquinas, who tried to burn his books before his death on the grounds they were so much straw? Some scholars suggest that the question is misplaced because the epilogue is in fact by another hand. Manning, 1.131-134, found so many *hapax legoumena* in the chapter that he could not believe it was by Benedict. The same holds true for Penco, 2.26-28.

Böckmann, 7.101-102, does not accept this easy way out of the problem. She cannot believe that any later scribe would have the gall to call

the Rule a "modest Rule for beginners." And she adds the salient note that just as Benedict introduces the unusual first plural pronoun *nos* (we) in 73.1 when speaking of the minimal observance of monks in his own time, so too he uses *nos* elsewhere when speaking of the same theme (18.25; 40.6; 49).

Probably the most daring suggestion concerning Benedict's self-effacing tone in RB 73 comes from Wathen, 3.106, who wonders if the author is perhaps not being somewhat sarcastic or ironic. Wathen wonders whether Benedict might not actually be telling us that if we want to reach perfection, which is not one of his themes, we will have to look elsewhere than his "little Rule." I would ask in return if it is even possible to imagine ending a serious document like this on such a note? Not only would one run the risk of flippancy, but the even greater risk of being misunderstood by the reader—indeed, by fifteen centuries of readers!

My own suggestion about the theme of diffidence is this: Since the epilogue is so much like the prologue (at least Prol 46–49) in its tone, should it not be taken in the same way? Just as the prologue is an exhortation addressed to a beginner in monastic life, so the epilogue is more of the same. If it is that, then to call it a "modest Rule for beginners" is good psychology, for it encourages a neophyte to take on the daunting task of following the Rule.

Granted, this does not answer all the questions. For one thing, the chapter now stands at the end of the document and appears to be addressing not a neophyte but a veteran. Even if we take an Evagrian approach to the question, as Böckmann, 7.109, and Holzherr, 332, suggest, there are problems. In this view, the Rule would be seen as *praktike,* that is, works of ascesis, which ought to lead to *theoretiké,* contemplation. Presumably, then, contemplation would be the teaching of the *Conferences* and *Institutes* and *Lives*. Yet it seems to me that this places many chapters of RB such as 27, 64 and 72 in an unfair light. They are not mere "works of ascesis," but a very elevated ethic of love. See Kardong, 7.237-240.

Probably the chief difficulty lies in the stark contrast between RB 72 and RB 73. No amount of source criticism and vocabulary study (see RB 72 Overview, A; RB 73 Overview, A; also note 73.1 on *autem*) can convince me that these two chapters belong in sequence. The individual-ascetical perspective of Cassian's theme of "perfection" does not proceed very well from the horizontal and concrete love-ethic of RB 72. Admittedly, it would be hard to imagine an epilogue that would form a good conclusion to RB 72, since it is a fully adequate expression of the highest form of Christian spirituality. In colloquial terms, RB 72 is an impossible act to follow.

D. The Dynamism of RB 73

It would not be fitting to end this Overview, and indeed, this book, on a negative note. After pointing out some of the anomalies of RB 73, one must still give due credit to its merits. For the epilogue of the Holy Rule has much to say to us. In itself it is not a weak ending to the document. To put it in a nutshell, RB 73 makes sure that the Rule ends in a vibrant, dynamic fashion. In this sense, the epilogue is a valid close to the Rule of Benedict, because the Rule teaches a dynamic spirituality.

As Vogüé, 4.111-114, puts it, Benedict has a two-stage mentality regarding the spiritual life. At several crucial points in the document, especially Prol 46–49, RB 7.67-70 and RB 73, he speaks of the passage from a lower, more primitive stage to a higher plane of existence. Whether the movement is from difficulty to ease (Prol 46–49), fear to love (7.67) or rule to perfection (73), he promises the monk that there will be progress and growth if only one will make use of the means to the end: *conversatio* and faith (Prol 48); humility (7.1-66) and the teaching of the Bible and Fathers (73.3-6).

The contrast with the Rule of the Master could not be greater. For the latter, there are also two classifications, and the use of similar vocabulary: "perfect/imperfect" (RM 7.2,10; 8.33; 9.37,41,46). Yet for the Master these categories are a very different thing, for the simple fact that he does not believe there can be any movement between them. For him, one is either a "perfect" monk or the other kind, with no possibility of change. Therefore it is not surprising that there is little or no talk of progress or growth in that Rule. That is very curious, since Cassian is the mentor of the Master and Cassian certainly teaches the possibility and need of personal growth and progress. See Kardong, 7.233-252; 14.82-105.

It is quite clear that Benedict follows Cassian in this matter and not the Master. It is true that once, in RB 6.3 (see note) Benedict transmits the Master's terminology of "perfect" disciples, but otherwise he carefully omits this extremely problematic theme. But there is another sharp difference between RB and RM that looms large in RB 73 and this has to do with timing of spiritual rewards. To put it simply, RB 73 promises the monk a deepening spiritual experience in this life. That may seem like a bland enough promise, since many spiritual systems do the same, but it is very different from the Rule of the Master. Nowhere does that author offer the monk hope of profound spiritual satisfaction in this life. All that the ordinary cenobite, the "imperfect" monk, can hope for is a heavenly reward. See notes on Prol 49–50.

But RB 73 only mentions heaven (*patriam caelestem* 73.8) once. Otherwise, the promise of this chapter is for "perfection" in this life.

Now a word like "perfection" may be off-putting for us, and the imagery that Benedict employs may heighten our uneasiness: "pinnacle of perfection," "virtues," "higher peaks of teaching and virtue." This sounds like exaggerated language, but we should be glad that Benedict has high hopes for us and this should encourage us to respond to those hopes.

As we have commented in regard to Prol 46–49 (see esp. note for Prol 49), Benedict fully expects that the ordinary monastic life will result in a real experience of God here and now. This can be described in various terms such as joy, love and union with God. Unlike the Master he does not think that all the monk can expect is a life of asceticism with a heavenly reward to follow. In that sense, the Rule of Benedict is very much in tune with the temper of our modern age. It cannot be accused of a dour and grim deferred eschatology; what is offered is fullness of life right now if one is willing to undertake the discipline of the Rule and the teaching of Scripture and the Fathers that lead to that life.

WORKS CITED

ABBREVIATIONS

ABR	*The American Benedictine Review*
ActSS	*Acta Sanctorum*
ACW	*Ancient Christian Writers*
ALMA	*Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*
ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers*
Ben	*Benedictina*
Bendic	*Benedictines*
BM	*Benedictinische Monatschrift*
CC	*Collectanea Cisterciensia*
CCL	*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*
Cist	*Cistercium*
CM	*Cuadernos Monasticos*
CS	*Cistercian Studies*
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*
DIP	*Dizionario degle Istituti di Perfezione*
DR	*Downside Review*
DS	*Dictionnaire de spiritualité*
EA	*Erbe und Auftrag*
FC	*Fathers of the Church*
GCS	*Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*
IF	*Inter Fratres*
LCL	*Loeb Classical Library*
LL	*Lettre de Ligugé*
LM	*Liturgie und Mönchtum*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
MI	*Monastische Informationen*
MS	*Monastic Studies*
NCE	*New Catholic Encyclopedia*

NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* (Migne)
PL	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* (Migne)
PLS	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Supplementum*
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*
RAM	*Revue d'ascétique et mystique*
RBén	*Revue Bénédictine*
RBS	*Regulae Benedicti Studia*
RevMab	*Revue Mabillon*
RevRel	*Review for Religious*
RHS	*Revue de histoire de spiritualité*
RThAm	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*
SC	*Sources chrétiennes*
Scr	*Scriptorium*
SM	*Studia Monastica*
StA	*Studia Anselmiana*
TJ	*Tjurunga*
Trad	*Traditio*
TWNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
WS	*Word and Spirit*

PATRISTIC WORKS CITED

act. Anas. = Acta Anastasiae, Chrysogoni, Chioniae, Irenes et Agapes, Theodotae: ActSS Apr. and H. Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1936.

Ambrose. *de inst. virg. = De institutis virginum:* PL 16.

___. *expos. de psalm. = Expositio de psalmo cxviii:* PL 15.1197; CSEL 42.

___. *off. = De officiis ministrorum:* PL 16.23; G. Banterle. Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 1977.

___. *paenit. = De paenitentia:* PL 16.465; CSEL 73.

___. *virg. = De virginitate:* PL 16.187; E. Cazzaniga. Turin: I. B. Paravia, 1948.

apoph. = Apophthegmata patrum: PG 65.71; J.-C. Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum.* Brussels: Societé des Bollandistes, 1962; Eng.: B. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers.* Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1975. See *Verba sen.; Vitae patrum.*

Arnobius. *ad Greg. = Liber ad Gregoriam:* PLS 3.221; G. Morin, *Études, textes, découvertes.* Maredsous: Éditions de l'Abbaye, 1913.

Augustine. *civ. = De civitate Dei:* PL 41.13; CCL 47 and 48; Eng.: Innumerable editions; useful are those by Dutton Co., in the Everyman series; Doubleday, in Image Books, Penguin.

NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* (Migne)
PL	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* (Migne)
PLS	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Supplementum*
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*
RAM	*Revue d'ascétique et mystique*
RBén	*Revue Bénédictine*
RBS	*Regulae Benedicti Studia*
RevMab	*Revue Mabillon*
RevRel	*Review for Religious*
RHS	*Revue de histoire de spiritualité*
RThAm	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*
SC	*Sources chrétiennes*
Scr	*Scriptorium*
SM	*Studia Monastica*
StA	*Studia Anselmiana*
TJ	*Tjurunga*
Trad	*Traditio*
TWNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
WS	*Word and Spirit*

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___. *virg. = De virginitate:* PL 16.187; E. Cazzaniga. Turin: I. B. Paravia, 1948.

apoph. = Apophthegmata patrum: PG 65.71; J.-C. Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum.* Brussels: Societé des Bollandistes, 1962; Eng.: B. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers.* Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1975. See *Verba sen.; Vitae patrum.*

Arnobius. *ad Greg. = Liber ad Gregoriam:* PLS 3.221; G. Morin, *Études, textes, découvertes.* Maredsous: Éditions de l'Abbaye, 1913.

Augustine. *civ. = De civitate Dei:* PL 41.13; CCL 47 and 48; Eng.: Innumerable editions; useful are those by Dutton Co., in the Everyman series; Doubleday, in Image Books, Penguin.

___. *conf.* = *Confessiones:* PL 32.659; CSEL 33,1; Innumerable editions, of which the best is F. J. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1943), regularly reprinted.
___. *c.Cresc.* = *Contra Cresconium:* PL 43.445; CSEL 52.
___. *c.Faust.* = *Contra Faustum Manichaeum:* PL 42.207; CSEL 25,1; Eng.: NPNF ser.1,4.
___. *c.Parm.* = *Contra epistulam Parmeniani:* PL 43.33; CSEL 51.
___. *de mend.* = *De mendacio:* PL 40.487; CSEL 41; Eng.: FC 16.
___. *ep.* = *Epistulae:* PL 33.61; PLS 2.359; CSEL 34,44,57,58; Eng.: NPNF ser.1,1 (fairly complete); FC 12,18,20,30,32.
___. *in Ioan.* = *In Ioannis Evangelium tractatus:* PL 35.1379; CCL 36; Eng.: NPNF ser.1,7.
___. *in psalm.* = *Enarrationes in psalmos:* PL 36.67; CCL 38,39,40; Eng.: NPNF ser.1,8; also ACW 29–30.
___. *mor. eccl.* = *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum:* PL 32.1309; Eng.: FC 56.
___. *op. mon.* = *De opere monachorum:* 40.547; CSEL 51; Eng.: FC 16.
___. *reg. serv.* = *Regula ad servos Dei* (also called *Praeceptum*): PL 32.1377; D. de Bruyne, "La première règle de saint Benoît." RBén 42 (1930) 316–342 (text 320–326); L. Verheijen, *La règle de saint Augustin,* 2 vols. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1967; FC 32.
___. *serm.* = *Sermones:* PL 38–39; PLS 2.742; Eng.: selected sermons in NPNF ser.1,6; FC 11,38; ACW 5,15.
___. *spec.* = *Speculum*. PL 34; CSEL 12.
Aurelian. *reg.* = *Regula Aureliani ad monachos:* PL 68.385.
Basil. *in psalm.* = *Homiliae super psalmos:* PG 29.209; trans. Rufinus *in psalm. I et LIX:* PG 31.1723,1790; G. Morin, *Anecdota Maredsolana* 4. Maredsous: Monastery of St. Benedict, 1893–1932.
___. *reg.* = *Regula* (trans. Rufinus): PL 103.483; Eng.: W.K.L. Clarke, *The Ascetical Works of St. Basil.* London: SPCK, 1925.
___. *reg. fus.* = *Regulae fusius tractatae:* PG 31.889; Eng.: FC 9; W.K.L. Clarke, *The Ascetical Works of St. Basil.* London: SPCK, 1925.
___. *reg. parv.* = *Regulae parvae:* PG 31; Eng.: W.K.L. Clarke, *The Ascetical Works of St. Basil.* London: SPCK, 1925.
Benedict of Aniane. *con. reg.* = *Concordia Regularum:* PL 103.393-1440.
Bernard of Clairvaux. *de grad. hum.* = *De gradibus humilitatis.* PL 182.942-971; Eng.: G. Burch. *The Steps of Humility.* Univ. Notre Dame Press, 1963.
Caesarius of Arles. *ep. ad virg.* = *Epistula hortatoria ad virginem Deo dicatam:* PL 67.1135; G. Morin, *S. Caesarii opera omnia.* Maredsous: Éditions de l'Abbaye, 1942.
___. *reg. mon.* = *Regula monachorum:* PL 67.1099; Morin, *Omnia opera,* 2.
___. *reg. virg.* = *Statuta sanctarum virginum:* PL 67.1105; Morin, *Omnia opera* 2.
___. *serm.* = *Sermones*. CCL 103–104.

___. *test.* = *Testamentum.* Morin, *Omnia opera* 2.
Cassian. *conf.* = *Conlationes:* PL 49.477; CSEL 13; SC 42,54,64; Eng.: NPNF ser.2.2.
___. *inst.* = *De institutis coenobiorum:* PL 49.53; CSEL 17; SC 109; Eng. NPNF ser.2,2.
Cassiodorus. *in psalm.* = *Expositio Psalmorum:* PL 70; CC 97–98.
___. *praef.* = *Praefatio de institutione divinarum litterarum:* PL 70.1106-1110.
Celestine. *ep. ad Cyr.* = *Epistula ad Cyrillum:* PL 50.461.
Chrysostom. *de stat. hom.* = *De statuis homiliae:* PG 49.53.
___. *de virg.* = *De virginitate:* 48.533-546.
Clement of Alexandria. *strom.* = *Strommata:* PG 8.685–9.9; GCS 15 (Books 1–6); 17 (Books 7–8); SC 30; Eng.: ANF 2.
Clement of Rome. *ad. Cor.* = *Epistula ad Corinthios:* PG 5.661.
Concilia Galliae, An. 314–510; An. 511–695; CC 148; 148A.
Constitutiones Apostolicae: PG 1.555-1157.
Cyprian. *domin. orat.* = *De dominica oratione:* PL 4.520; 47.1113; CSEL 3,1; Eng.: ACW 20.
___. *ep.* = *Epistulae:* PL 4.224; CSEL 3,2; Eng.: ANF 5 (with different numbering); FC 51.
___. *hab. virg.* = *De habitu virginum:* PL 4.440; CSEL 3,1; Eng.: ANF 5.
___. *testim.* = *Ad Quirinium* (*Testimonium* 1.3): PL 4.675; CSEL 3,1; Eng.: ANF 5.
Didache: PG 5.661; F. X. Funk and K. Bihlmeyer, *Die apostolischen Väter*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1956; Eng.: ACW 1; FC 5; LCL.
Donatus. *reg. ad virg.* = *Regula ad virgines:* PL 87.273.
Dorotheus of Gaza. *doc. div.* = *Doctrinae diversae:* PG 88; SC 92; Eng.: *Discourses and Sayings*. Trans. Eric Wheeler. Cistercian Studies Series 33. Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1977.
Egeria the Pilgrim. *peregr.* = Itinerarium seu Peregrinatio ad loca sancta: PLS 1.1047; CSEL 39; CCL 175; SC 21: Eng.: ACW 38.
Eugippius, *v.Sev.* = *Vita Severini.* CSEL 9,2.
Evagrius. *oct. vit.* = *De octo vitiis:* PG 79.1451.
___. *prak.* = *Practicus:* PG 40.1220,1244,1272: SC 170–171; Eng.: J. Bamberger. *Evagrius Ponticus: The Praktikos; Chapters on Prayer.* Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian, 1970.
___. *reg. mon.* = *Regula monastica:* PG 40.1264.
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Feriolus. *reg.* = *Regula Ferioli:* G. Holzherr, *Regula Ferioli*. Einsiedeln, 1961; V. Desprez, *RevMab* 1982:1–2.
Ferrandus. *vit. Fulg.* = *Vita Fulgentii Ruspensis:* PL 65.
Fructuosus. *reg. com.* = *Regula communis.* PL 87.
Gelasius. *ep.* = *Epistulae:* PL 67.308; ed. Mohlberg. Rome, 1968.
Gregory the Great. *dial.* = *Dialogorum libri IV:* PL 77.149; U. Moricca, *Gregorii Magni dialogi libri IV.* Roma: Tipografia del Senato, 1924; SC 251,260,265; Eng.: FC 39.

___. *ep.* = *Registrum epistularum:* PL 77.441; 84.831; Ewald and Hartmann in MGH *Epist.* 1–2.
___. *Hom. ev.* = *Homilia in Evangelia:* PL 76.1075-1312.
___. *reg. past.* = *Regula pastoralis:* PL 77.13-128; Eng.: ACW 11.
Hilary of Arles. *vita Hon.* = *Vita Honorati:* PL 50.1249; SC 235; Eng.: FC 15.
Hilary of Poitiers. *in psalm.* = *Tractatus super psalmos:* PL 9.231; CSEL 22.
Hildemar. *exp. reg.* = *Expositio Regulae ab Hildemaro tradita:* R. Mittermüller, *Vita et regula SS. P. Benedicti una cum expositione regulae a Hildemaro tradita.* Regensburg: Pustet 1880.
Hist. Mon. = *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* (trans. Rufinus): PL 21.387; see A. M. Festugière, *Édition critique du text grec,* Subsidia Hagiographica 34 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1961); Eng.: *The Lives of the Desert Fathers.* Trans. Norman Russell. Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1981.
Irenaeus. *adv. haer.* = *Adversus haereses:* PG 7.433; SC 100,152,153,210,211; Eng.: ANF 1.
___. *demonstr. apost. praed.* = *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis:* PO 12.5.
Isidore. *etym.* = *Etymologiarum.* PL 82.73; MGH *auct. ant.* xi.924.
___. *reg. mon.* = *Regula monachorum:* PL 83; 103.
Jerome. *epist.* = *Epistulae:* PL 22.325; CSEL 54,55,56; Eng.: ACW 33 (letters 1–22).
___. *adv. Ruf.* = *Apologia adversus libros Rufini:* PL 23; CCL 79.
___. *in Ezech.* = *Commentarii in Ezechielem:* PL 25.15.
___. *in Gal.* = *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Galatas:* PL 26.307.
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Justinian. *cod.* = *Codex: Corpus juris civilis* II. Ed. P. Krüger. Berlin: Weidmann, 1929.
___. *nov.* = *Novellae: Corpus juris civilis Novellae* III. Eds. R. Schöll and W. Kroll. Berlin, 1928.
Leo I. *ep.* = *Epistulae:* PL 54.593-1218; Eng.: FC 34.
___. *tract.* = *Tractatus septem et nonaginta:* PL 54.141; CCL 138,138A.
Leonine Sacramentary. Mohlberg XXX.1104.
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Methodius. *conviv.* = *Convivium:* PG 18.221; GCS 27; SC 95; Eng.: ACW 6; ANF 6.
Orat. Manassae = *Oratio Manassae: Biblia sacra juxta vulgatam versionem.* Ed. R. Weber. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969; Eng.: R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913.

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___. *hom. cant.* = *Homiliae in Canticum canticorum.* PG 13.37; GCS* 33.
___. *hom. in Jesu Nave* = *Homiliae in Jesu Nave.* Trans. Rufinus: PG 12.825; GCS 7; Eng.: R. B. Tollington, *Selections from the Commentaries and Homilies of Origen.* London: SPCK, 1929.
___. *hom. in Num.* = *homiliae in Numeris:* PG 11–17.
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or. mon. = *ordo monasterii:* L. Verheijen, *La règle de Saint Augustin.* Paris (1967) 148–152.
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Palladius. *hist. Laus.* = *Historia Lausiaca:* PG 34.995; PL 74.249; C. Butler, *The Lausiac History of Palladius,* 2 vols. Texts and Studies 6,1-2. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1898 and 1904; ACW 34.
pass. Julian. et Bas. = *Passio Juliani et Basilissae: Act SS* Jan. et Jun.
pass. Seb. = *Passio Sebastiani:* PL 17.1027; *ActSS* Jan.
Pelagius. *ep. ad Demet.* = *Demetriadem:* PL 30.
Peter Chrysologus. *ep.* = *Epistolae, In symbolum apostolum:* PL 52.371.
Philoxenus. *ad. Pat.* = *Epistula ad Patricium:* PO 30.
Porcarius of Lérins. *mon.* = *Monita:* PLS 3.373; A. Wilmart in RBén 26 (1909) 475–480.
Pseudo-Basil. *admon.* = *Admonitio ad filium spiritualem:* PL 103.683-700; P. Lehmann (Munich: SAM, 1955–1957).
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Sulpicius Severus. *dial. = Dialogorum:* PL 20.183; CSEL 1; Eng.: FC 7.

___. *ep. sor. = Epistula 2 ad sororem:* PL 20.175; CSEL 1; Eng.: NPNF ser.2,11; FC 7.

___. *Mart. = Vita Martini Turonensis:* PL 20.159; CSEL 1; SC 133–135; Eng.: FC 7.

Terence. *Andreia:* LCL trans. John Sargeant. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953.

Tertullian. *de orat. = De oratione:* PL 1.1149; CSEL 20; CCL 1; Eng.: FC 40.

Theodore of Canterbury. *can. = Canones:* PL 99.927.

verb. sen. = Verba Seniorum: PL 73.855; J.-C. Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum.* Subsidia Hagiographica 36. Brussels: Société de Bollandistes, 1962; Eng.: O. Chadwick, *Western Asceticism.* Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958.

Vincent of Lérins. *com. = Commonitorium:* PL 1.637-686; FC 7.

vis. Pauli = Visio Pauli. Ed. and trans. T. Silverstein, London, Christophers, 1935; Eng.: E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha,* London: Lutterworth, 1965 (2).

vit. Abb. Acaun. = Vitae Abbatum Acaunis: MGH Scr. Mer. III.

vit. Ant = Vita Antonii: PG 26.835; PL 73.127; see H. Hoppenbrouwers, *La plus ancienne version latine de la vie de S. Antoine par S. Athanase: Étude de critique textuelle.* Nijmegen: Dekker and Van de Vegt, 1960. Eng.: ACW 10.

vit. Caes. = Vita Caesarii Arletensis. Morin, II (see Caesarius).

vit. Hon. = Vita Honorati. PL 1.1249-1272.

vit. Mac. = Vita Macarii Romani: PL 73.415.

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vit. patr. = Vitae Patrum: see *Verba Seniorum.*

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INDEX OF KEY WORDS AND THEMES DISCUSSED IN NOTES

Abbot *(abbas),* 1.2; 2.1,3,13; 55.3; 72.10
Accept *(suscipere),* 27.6; 53.7,14; 58T,1,21,25; 61.13; 64.7; 68.1
Acedia *(acediosus),* 1.10; 48.18
Action, Prol 1,4,21,22,29,34,39; 2.12,21; 4.63; 7.32
Alacrity, Prol 2; 5.8; 11.3; 22.6; 43.1; 48.12; 66.4; 73.2,8
Amputate *(amputare),* 2.26; 33.1; 55.18; 64.14
Anchorite *(anachorita),* 1.3,8
Ascent *(ascendere),* 7.5,9; 73.9
Ascesis, Prol 46; 4.10; 41.5; 49.1,4

Battle *(miles, pugnare),* Prol 3,40; 2.20; 58.9; 61.10
Bless, 7.43,62; 9.5; 25.6; 38.4; 49.8; 63.15; 66.3; 71.8
Body, Prol 40; 4.11; 7.9; 57.5; 58.25; 61.6
Brother *(frater),* 7.43; 9.5; 24.6; 35.1; 36.4; 48.21; 63.12; 67.1; 71.8; 72.8

Care *(cura, sollicitudo),* 1.8; 21.2; 22.3; 27T,7; 31.3,9; 36.7; 46.6; 47.1; 58.6,7; 70.4; 71.4
Cell *(cella),* 1.10; 58.5; 66.2
Cenobite *(cenobita),* 1.2,3,13; 5.12; 34.5; 64.7
Chastity, 4.64; 58.25; 64.9
Child *(filius, infans, puer),* 2.29; 30T.2,3; 37T; 59.1; 63.9,19; 70.4
Christ, Prol 3; 2.3; 4.72; 5.15; 7.69; 36.7; 63.13; 72.11; 73.8
Competition, 22.6; 72.4,6
Confess, 7.44,46
Conscience *(conscientia),* 7.35,37
Consider *(consideratio, deliberatio),* 37.2; 48.25; 53.19; 55.3; 58.14,16
Conversatio *(conversatio),* Prol 49; 1.3; 21.1; 22.2; 49T; 58.1,17; 63.1; 73.1

Death *(mors),* 2.10; 4.47
Desire *(desiderium, concupiscentia),* 1.8,9; 4.6,46,59; 5.12; 7.12,23,31; 49.7
Devil *(diabolus),* Prol 28; 1.4; 38.8; 43.8; 53.5; 54.4; 58.28
Devoted *(pius),* Prol 1; 2.24; 27.8; 37.3
Dignity *(gravitas),* 6.3; 22.6; 42.11; 43.2
Discernment *(discernere; discretio),* 2.16,31; 3.7; 5.6,12; 64.9,18,19; 70.6
Disciple *(discipulus),* 2.6; 3.6; 4.61; 5.9; 6.3,5; 7.10,35; 24.6; 36.10; 54.5; 67.6; 70.6
Discipline *(disciplina),* 2.22; 3.10; 7.9,31; 19T; 24.1; 30.2; 48.20; 54.5; 55.17; 58T; 60.5; 62.3; 63.18; 65.19; 67.6; 70.6

Easter *(Pascha),* 15; 41.1; 48.3; 49.7
Edification *(aedificatio),* 6.3; 38.9,12; 42.3; 47.3; 53.9
Endure *(sustinere),* 7.37,38,43

Enough, 39.3; 40.6,7; 55.10
Envy *(invidia),* 4.67; 34; 55.21; 65.7,22
Eternity *(aeternus),* 4.46; 5.3; 5.10; 6.8; 7.11; 72.2,12
Evil, 2.28; 23.5
Example *(exemplum),* 2.12; 7.55; 27.8; 60.5; 61.19
Experience *(experientia),* 1.6; 4.77
Eye *(oculus),* Prol 9,18; 4.47; 7.3,10,65; 19.1

Faith *(fides, credere),* Prol 21,49; 2.2; 7.23; 19.1; 53.2; 63.13; 68.5
Family, 4.8; 51.2; 54.1; 59; 72.10
Fast *(ieiunium),* 4.13; 38.10; 41.1,4; 42.2,5; 53.10
Father *(pater),* Prol 1,6; 2.3,24; 9.8; 18.25; 31.2; 33.5; 42.3; 48.8; 49.9; 69.2; 73.2,4,5
Fault, 45T,2,3
Favoritism *(acceptio personarum),* 2.20; 34.2
Fear *(timor),* Prol 29,36; 3.11; 5.9; 7.10,64,67,77; 19.1,3; 31.2; 36.7; 47.4; 48.20; 50.3; 53.15,21; 58.15,21; 64.1,15; 65.15; 66.4; 70.3; 72.9
Flock *(grex),* 2.8,32; 27.9; 28.8; 63.2; 64.18
Fool *(stultus),* 2.28; 7.59
Foot washing *(pedes lavare),* 35.9; 53.13,14
Forgetting/memory *(oblivio/memor),* 2.6,34; 7.10; 19.3; 31.8; 39.9; 55.2; 63.3,14; 64.7,18; 65.12,21

God *(Deus),* Prol 16; 1.7
Gospel *(evangelium),* Prol 21,33; 11.9; 12.4; 13.11; 17.8
Grace *(gratia),* Prol 4,18,41; 1.5; 4.42,43; 5.19; 20.4; 36.4
Gravity *(gravitas),* 6.3; 7.60; 22.6; 42.11; 43.2; 55.17

Hatred *(odium),* 4.60,65; 64.11
Heart *(cor),* Prol 1,10,26,40,49; 2.12; 3.8; 7.8,14,18,51; 9.16; 52.4
Heaven, 7.5,10
Heights *(culmina),* 7.5; 73.9
Hell, 7.21; 72.1
Help *(solacium),* 31.17; 35.3,4; 53.18; 66.5
Holiness *(sanctus),* 1.9; 4.62,77; 21.1
Honor *(honor),* 4.8; 9.7; 11.9; 34.2; 36.4; 53.2,15; 63.10; 72.4
Hospitality, 1.10; 53.1
House of God *(domus Dei),* 31.19; 53.2; 64.5
Humility *(humilitas),* 2.21; 7.1,52; 19.1; 31.13; 34.3; 53.6,22; 57.3; 65.2

Injury *(injuria),* 7.35,42; 31.1; 58.3
Installation, 64T,1,2,7; 65.1,3,4,6,12,15

Jealousy *(zelus),* 4.66,67; 65.22; 72.1
Joy *(gaudium),* 4.77; 5.16; 49.6,7
Junior *(junior, minor),* 3.3; 4.71; 22.7,8; 63; 68.4; 71.4
Justice *(justitia),* Prol 25; 2.5,9,14,18; 4.33; 7.48; 16.5; 64.10

King, kingdom *(rex, regnum),* Prol 3,21,50; 61.10

Lauds *(matutina),* 12T,1,3
Laughter *(risus, scurrilitas),* 4.54; 6.8; 7.59,60; 43.2; 49.7
Lectio Divina *(lectio divina),* Prol 1; 4.55; 9.8; 21.4; 42.6; 48.1,4,5,10,13,23; 73.3
Life *(vita),* Prol 44; 72.12
Light *(lumen, lux),* Prol 9,13,44; 41.9
Listen *(audire),* Prol 1; 3.3; 5.4; 6.6; 9.8; 43.1
Lord *(Dominus),* Prol 3,6,16; 2.3,20
Love *(amor, caritas, dilectio),* Prol 47,49; 2.17; 4.1,13,21,27,52,64,68, 72,77; 5.10; 7.34; 35.2,6; 63.13; 64.15; 66.4; 68.5; 71.4; 72.3,8

Master *(magister),* Prol 1; 2.24; 4.61; 5.8; 6.5,6
Measure *(mensura, moderatio, temperare),* 11.2; 25.5; 31.12; 41.5,9; 42.8; 48.9; 55.8; 64.19; 68.2; 70.5

Meditation *(meditatio),* 8.3; 48.23; 52.2; 58.5
Memory / forgetting *(memor/oblivio),* 2.6,34; 7.10; 19.3; 31.8; 39.9; 55.2; 63.3,14; 64.7,13,18; 65.12,21
Mercy *(misericordia),* 34.4; 37.2; 53.14; 64.9,10
Merit *(merces, meritum),* 4.76; 5.19; 21.4; 31.8; 35.2; 36.5; 40.4; 49.9; 59.4; 62.6; 60.1; 63.1; 64.2,6
Missas (prayers)*,* 17.4; 24.3; 35.14; 38.2; 60.4
Monastery *(monasterium),* 1.2; 7.55; 73.1
Monk *(monachus),* 1.1; 18.24
Murmur *(murmurare),* 4.39; 5.14,17; 23.1; 34.6; 35.13; 40.8,9; 41.5; 53.18; 65.2
Mutuality *(invicem),* 35.6; 63.17; 71.1; 72.4

Necessity, 40.5,8

Obedience *(oboedientia),* Prol 2; 5.13; 71.1; 72.6
Office, divine *(officium),* 16T; 19.2

Participation, Prol 50; 24.3,4; 43.5
Patience *(patientia),* Prol 37,50; 7.35,42; 36.5; 58.3,11; 68.2; 72.5
Peace *(pax),* Prol 17,21; 4.25; 31.1,17; 34.5; 65.11
Pelagianism, Prol 4; 4.42,43
Perfection *(perfectio),* 5.8; 6.3; 7.67; 73.2,8
Poor *(pauperes),* 4.14; 40.8; 48.7; 53.15; 55.9; 59T,4; 66.3
Power *(potestas),* 39.6; 54.3; 56.2; 58.25; 63.2; 65.2,5; 70.2
Praepositus (prior), 21.7; 62.7; 65 passim; 71.3
Prayer *(oratio),* Prol 4,30,56; 19.3; 28.5; 52.1,3,4; 53.5,8
Presumption *(praesumptio),* 3.4; 20.1; 26.1; 33.2,6; 38.8; 43.18; 47.3; 49.9; 54.2; 57.4; 62.2; 67.5; 69T; 70.1
Pride *(superbia, exaltatio, elatio),* 4.34; 7.2,7; 38.2; 65.2,18; 68.2
Prior (superior)*,* 6.7; 7.41; 13.12; 20.5; 21.7; 38.9; 40.5; 43.19; 53.3,8,10; 62.8; 63.10,12,15; 65; 68.4; 71.4,6,7
Progress, Prol 49; 62.5
Prostration *(prostratus),* 44.1,7; 53.7; 58.23; 67.3; 71.8
Punishment *(castigatio, correptio, increpatio, verbera),* 2.25,27; 21.5; 28T; 30T; 32.4; 33.8; 43.14; 48.19,20; 64.12; 65.19; 69.4; 71.5,6
Purity of Heart *(puritas cordis),* 20.2,3; 52.1

Rank *(ordo),* 2.18,19; 21.4; 29.2; 38.12; 43.4; 44.5; 60.6; 63
Reason *(ratio),* Prol 47; 2.18; 7.60; 31.7; 61.4; 65.14; 70.5
Renunciation *(abrenuncians),* Prol 3
Revelation *(revelare),* 3.3; 7.45
Reverence *(reverentia),* 6.7; 9.7; 20T,1; 52.2
Rule, monastic *(regula),* 1.2,6; 3.7; 23.1; 37.2,3; 58.15; 64.20; 65.18; 66.8; 73.1,8
Run *(currere),* Prol 2,13,49; 4.77; 5.8; 22.6; 27.5; 43.1; 53.3; 66.4; 73.2,8

Sadness *(tristia),* Prol 5,46; 27.2; 31.6; 34.3; 35.3; 36.4; 40.5; 48.7; 54.4
Salvation *(salus),* Prol 48; 2.33; 3.5; 28.5; 41.5
Scripture *(scriptura),* 2.4; 7.1; 9.8; 21.4; 48.15; 53.9; 65.9; 73.3
Seek *(quaerere),* Prol 14; 2.35; 7.27; 27.8; 58.7
Seniors *(maiores, seniores),* 3.12; 4.50; 7.41; 22.3,7,8; 46.6; 48.17; 56.3; 58.6; 71.4
Service *(ministerium, servitium),* Prol 45; 1.11; 2.20,31; 5.3; 16.2; 18.24; 31.8; 35.1,10,13; 36.1; 38.6; 61.10; 64.21
(servire), Prol 45; 2.18,20,31; 5.3; 16.2; 18.24; 35.1,6,15; 36.1,4,7; 38.6; 49.5; 50.4; 58.25; 64.21

Shepherd *(pastor),* 1.8; 2.7,9,39; 27.7; 63.2
Silence *(silentium, taciturnitas),* 6T,1,2; 7.35,56; 38.5; 42.1; 44.1; 48.5
Sloth *(desidia),* Prol 2; 4.38; 48.23
Son *(filius),* Prol 1; 2.3; 59
Speech *(eloquia, responsum),* 4.52,53; 6.2,3; 7.58,60; 19.3; 31.13; 66.1,2,4
Spirit, Holy *(Spiritus),* Prol 11; 2.3; 4.46; 7.70; 49.6,7,9
Stability *(stabilitas),* 1.11; 4.78; 58.4,9,17; 60.9; 61.5
Step *(gradus),* 5.1; 7.9,10
Stewardship *(dispensatio, ministratio, vilicatio),* 22.2; 31.8; 38.6; 53.22; 64.5,7,21
Support *(consolatio, solacium),* 1.4,5; 27.3

Teach *(docere),* 2.4,5,13,23; 5.6,15; 6.6; 21.4; 64.2,9; 73.9
Tears *(lacrimae),* 4.57; 20.3; 52.4
Tent *(tabernaculum),* Prol 22,23,24,39
Thought *(cogitatio),* Prol 28; 1.5; 4.50; 7.14,44; 46.5; 63.3,14; 65.5,21
Threat *(contendere),* Prol 35; 3.9
Tools *(ferramentum, instrumentum),* 4T,75,78; 32T; 73.6

Useful *(utilis),* 3.3,12; 7.18; 35.1; 42.4; 48.18; 65.12; 72.7

Vice *(vitium),* 29.1; 33.7; 43.13; 61.6,7; 64.3,4,11; 65.18; 72.2
Vigils *(vigiliae),* 8T; 9T; 10T; 11T; 15.2

Way *(via),* Prol 20,48; 1.10; 5.11; 71.2; 72.1
Weakness *(aegrotus, debilis, imbecillis, infirmis),* 27.6; 34.2,3; 35.3; 36T,8; 37.2; 39.1,11; 40.3; 42.4; 48.24; 64.19; 72.5
Will *(voluntas),* Prol 3; 1.9,11; 4.60; 5.7; 7.19,20; 33.4; 49.6
Wisdom *(sapientia),* 7.27; 19.4; 21.4; 28.2; 53.22; 64.2; 66.1
Word *(verbum),* 2.12,27; 4.53; 7.60,61
Work *(labor, opus),* Prol 2,14; 1.10; 4.78; 7.49,70; 25.3; 40.5; 41.2,5; 48.1,7,8,24; 49.4; 52.4; 53.17; 57.1,3
Work of God *(opus Dei),* 7.62; 16T; 43.3; 47T; 48.1; 50.3; 52.2; 58.7
World *(saeculum),* 1.7; 4.20; 57.8; 64.17